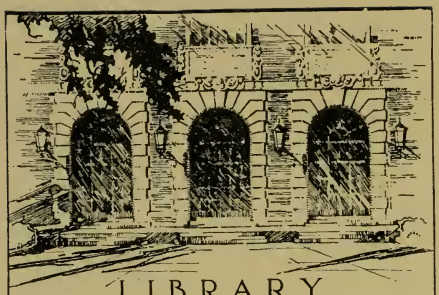

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TRANSFUSION:

BY

THE LATE WILLIAM GODWIN, JUN.

WITH A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY HIS FATHER.

Some noble spirits—judging by themselves—
May yet conjecture what I might have been.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

JOHN MACRONE, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE.

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TRANSFUSION;

OR,

THE ORPHANS OF UNWALDEN.

CHAPTER I.

Penth. Who is the saint you serve?
Ithor. Friendship, or nearness
Of birth, to any but my sister durst not
Have moved that question: as a secret, sister,
I dare not murmur to myself.

FORD'S BROKEN HEART.

FAITHFUL to his word, and no doubt deeply buried in the drinking joys for which he seemed to have imbibed so keen a relish, Urfort did not make his appearance at the Count's hotel till the following morning. The nobleman had had some

misgivings as to the condition in which he would present himself after a second night of deep and free carousing: but they all vanished on Urfort's appearance, for he looked fresh and hale; and those who had not been in the secret of his night-long debauch would have little imagined that the period that had elapsed since he had quitted De Mara's hotel, had been spent in wine-bibbing rather than sleep, and that a hasty hour of slumber was all that he had allowed himself.

Urfort found De Mara still full of high hopes as to the speedy consummation of his scheme with respect to Madeline; but at the same time there was mixed with it more of caution and consideration than the first burst of assurance on the previous evening had allowed him to entertain. The interest which Albert had shown in favour of Wahrend having sunk deep into his mind, and remembering how nearly he himself had suffered for running counter to the youth's influence, he could not conceal from himself that the only way in which Wahrend's presence could have become

formidable to his design, was by its being supported by the patronage and countenance of Madeline's brother.

It was with such reflections as these pressing through upon his mind, that he awaited the arrival of Urfort.

"You are well come," cried he, as soon as he perceived that his agent had entered the room, and was awaiting his further directions—"you are well come. And now to business. What further do you propose?"

"Nay, that is for your Lordship to say. I was indulged with the black corks last night, and therefore cannot be less to-day than all obedience in return."

"I am afraid," said De Mara, "that now that you drank so deeply and have slept so lightly, that you have not yet been able to awaken your brain to any effect. One word, however, will tell you which way I would have you turn your attention—Albert?"

"With all my heart," said the other, "I owe

the lad a grudge, and I care not how soon the opportunity comes for striking a balance."

"Owe him a grudge—and for what?"

"Nay, noble patron," replied Urfort, with some slight hesitation, which, however, he contrived to gloss over by a sinister look executed in his best dare-devil style—"nay, how can you ask that? Has he not crossed your path?—and is not that crossing mine? For till your way is made smooth, I am a hundred louis out of pocket. But what would you have me do with the stripling?"

"Do what you like with him!" said the Count, hotly—"for I hate his very name. For any thing I care you may take him to the top of a certain jetty that you wot of, and cast him into the Lake!"

"Humph! I rather think the young gentleman might be in no humour to trust himself there with me. Besides, where is the use of having a Machiavel like me for your agent, if it is mere brute force that is to be called into practice?"

"But my Machiavel, like he from whom you borrow the name, seems to be dead and beneath the sod."

"'*Resurgam!*' said the bravo. "Count twenty, noble patron, and you shall have a stratagem worthy of my *soubriquet.*"

"Twenty!—there, suppose them counted," exclaimed De Mara; "and now for this notable device."

"You give but short shrift: but I think I have it. Albert is only feared because he is loved by his sister—am I right so far?"

"Ay!" said the Count, "but this only looks like begging time."

"Does this so also? Let Albert be set at loggerheads with his sister, and his influence ceases."

"That sounds well in words; but I know not whose skill shall be enough to accomplish such a point."

"I think I observed yesterday where there was room to hitch a quarrel between them; and

at all events it will be worth the trial if it only serves to furbish my somewhat rusted talents of intrigue, so as to give them more insinuating readiness for the next attempt."

"Well, as you like," said De Mara, "but now our time is precious."

"I will about it instantly; but let me first understand how far I am to give an account of your actions to the lady. Are you to be in a complaining, or a resisting humour to-day?"

"To my fancy you had better leave me and my humours alone till you get the one thing you have undertaken fairly off your hands. It is a sad mistake of great geniuses to think they can never have enough to do at once."

"With all my heart!—the less to do the better; and therefore Master Albert shall claim all my attention to-day. It is but saying, if the girl press me on the subject, that I have not yet had time to sound M. Jacotot as to those quips and cranks of his present disposition."

"Good! let that be your cue to-day; and now

away, for the maiden expects you, and the earlier you pay your visit there the better your opportunity to fall in with Albert."

Urfort took the hint, and quitted the Count's hotel for the abode of Madeline. He did not, however, stride along so eagerly as on the previous day, for he felt that the task he had to perform that morning was one of a much more difficult nature. In his first interview with Madeline he had only the general purpose in view of gaining her good-will and confidence without alarming her suspicions, or appearing to have too much cognisance of things beyond his sphere: but on this occasion he had a much more intricate affair on his hands for management,—he had to insinuate a displeasure which Madeline had never yet felt, and to sow the seeds of unkindness where nothing but the tenderest affection and solicitude had hitherto taken root; and all this, as if to render the labour still more onerous, was to be done under the guise of a rustic simplicity that forbade his putting forth the real strength of

his latent energies, and that forced him to trust to dark and apparently unintentional hints and suggestions, in the hope that Madeline's fruitful mind might adopt them, and give them the bearing and tendency for which they were purposed.

It was on this account that Urfort's step was less rapid, and his bound less elastic, as he made his way towards his second visit to the maiden. His had ever been a character prompt to act, and speedy in execution; but still, as the most adventurous sailor would shrink from daring ocean's peril without, at least, the compass to guide his doubtful ploughing of the deep, so Urfort felt that with all his audacity for the undertaking, it would be too venturous even for *his* disposition to proceed without something like a chart laid down by which he might propose to steer. At present all was barren and vacant; and as the schoolboy minces his morning gait that he may have an opportunity of conning his ill-learnt task, so Urfort dallied with his pace that he might afford himself still further time to prick

his imagination into something like a *point d'appui*, round which he might rally his surmises and suggestions. But even were such vantage-ground attained, what prospect was there that the arms he proposed to wield were sufficient to gain the victory? And here it was that what he had already apprehended of Madeline's character became of use; for he felt that had he to practise those distant hints on one of dull and unobservant impulse, his efforts would be in vain, and he should be compelled either to abandon that village simplicity which was his present guise, or the project itself which formed part of the motive why that simplicity had been assumed. But he had better hopes, from what he conceived to be Madeline's temperament of mind. She was vivid in apprehension, quick in arriving at conclusions, and, what was still better, seemed to have an active and sensitive disposition of thought, which was ever on the alert to conjure formations of its own out of the slightest materials afforded by others, and which took delight in magnifying, or rather in

embodying and giving a substance to those things which were presented to her merely in embryo and obscurity.

For a considerable portion of the interval between the Count's hotel and Madeline's apartments, the pace of Urfort was such as has been described: but on a sudden it broke into its wonted speed and lightness of step; and if the outward movements of man may be taken as indicative of the movements within, it might be inferred that some new light had crossed his mind, or that he had gained a footing whereon to build his operations, and that he once again found himself in a condition to face the victim, whose downfall was to be the criterion of his ingenuity in wickedness and mischief.

Madeline was expecting her treacherous ally; and when he entered the room she bestowed on him a smile, and almost sprang up from her seat to receive him, till the recollection of his menial condition sobered her in her place again, and taught her to establish a more cautious survey over her feelings.

"What news do you bring me of the Count?" cried she.

"My master has not sent me with any message to-day," replied the other.

"But what is your own message, good Urfort? What have you yourself gathered towards the — the — understanding of yesterday?"

"Not much as yet, Ma'm'selle, for M. Jacotot seemed to think me too simple to answer my questions in a straightforward way, though why he should have such notions is more than I can tell. I don't think I am half so simple as he, for he talks for an hour, and, when the hour is over, has said nothing after all."

"That is not amiss," said Madeline with a smile, "as a definition of simple conversation. But I should have thought you would have found a way of pressing him to the point."

"Why, I did not well know how to do that, for M. Jacotot has lived at Paris, and is as slippery as an eel. When I thought I had got him in a corner, he slipped off without as much as saying

good-bye, and left me to follow as well as I could."

"And so you came empty-handed?" cried the maiden in a disappointed tone.

"Not quite, Miss, for I bethought me of a famous scheme to get at the truth."

"Ah! what was that?"

"Why, as I found I could get nothing out of the man, I thought to myself I would try what I could get out of the master."

"Good Heaven!" cried Madeline, "surely you did not attempt any thing so foolish? He was sure to descry your object, and discovery would quickly follow."

"I took care to have no object, and so there was none for him to descry. All that I did was to answer his bell when he was at breakfast this morning, and when he saw me he began just in the place I wanted of his own accord."

"For the sake of mercy, tell me all that passed!"

"I don't think I can do that," said Urfort with

a half grin, "for my Lord talked a great deal: but I dare say I can remember some of it. In the first place, you must know that when I went back yesterday, M. Jacotot took your letter from me, and would not let me go in to the Count myself, because, as he said, my Lord was so angry at my delay. So when I went up to him this morning, he asked me how I came to be so long in bringing an answer; and I told him that you were interrupted from writing, first by Master Wahrend, and then by Master Albert."

"And what did he say about Wahrend?" eagerly inquired the girl.

"Oh, he said little enough about him, as if he scarcely seemed to like to mention his name, but he said a good deal about Master Albert."

"About Albert!" exclaimed Madeline; "I am afraid if it was only about him that he talked, that we are still as much in the dark as ever."

Urfort bit his lips, as he perceived the subject thus melting away, and Madeline's suspicions unaroused: "however," he added, "that was just

why I said I had not gathered much as yet; but though the Count laid all the blame on Master Albert, yet after what you said, I could not help thinking it was only a double of his, and that the real thing lay with Master Wahrend."

"De Mara blame Albert!" cried the orphan; "in what possible way could he do that?"

Urfort brightened again, as he continued: "Why, he said that there was something very mysterious about the young gentleman."

"Did he say that?" exclaimed Madeline; and then she half audibly muttered to herself, "true enough! true enough!"

Urfort watched the progress of his words, and was at hand to follow up the advantage he had gained. "I do not know that I ought to have said he blamed Master Albert, for all he said was that this mystery was something difficult to be handled, and it was unpleasant for a nobleman of rank, title, and estate, to have to encounter it."

"That is not unjust," thought the maiden.

"'But then,'" added he, "'no doubt, Mademoi-

selle Schvolen is fully aware what all this mystery means; — and yet no, for if she knew it, she has that pure feeling that she could not leave me in doubt on so sensitive a point.' And thus he seemed to be wavering backward and forward, and I could not help thinking what a pity it was that you were not there to set all right with a word."

"Alas, alas!" cried Madeline, almost unconsciously, "I have not the words with which to clear up his doubts, for my brother is no less ambiguous to me than to the rest of the world."

"Well, lady, I never should have thought of that; besides, who knows but his grand mystery might be of use to us in finding out my Lord's disposition? My old father was always telling us never to throw away a straw, for even that might be of use to tickle a trout."

"Right, right," exclaimed the maiden; "and I will insist on a sister's right to know what is passing in his mind. It would be pity, now I am acquainted with one of the points pressing on

De Mara's mind, not to have it in my power at least to make that clear."

Urfort, delighted at finding that his suggestions had been received in the way his hopes would have dictated, took care, ere he went, to drop one or two further hints that might serve to fix Madeline's attentions the more notedly.

"Yes," said Madeline to herself, when left alone with none but her own busy imagination to bear her company — "yes, I will seek an explanation of this mystery from Albert. He has ever been next my heart, and he has no claim to conceal from me the strange career in which he has of late been running. De Mara says right: the best title that rank has to the respect of the world, is when it sets noble and praiseworthy examples to those who move in a humbler sphere; and I have therefore no right to expect that a nobleman and peer of France shall, for my sake, overlook what may be supposed by the world to cast a dimness on the lustre of his house, though Heaven and my heart know that dear Albert is

as incapable of thinking or harbouring evil, as Mont Blanc's icy sides are of affording comfort to the adventurous mountaineer. I will seek my brother this instant: if need be, I will remind him of what we are to each other—I will tell him how affection should be another word for confidence—I will spread my own mind open before him, and he shall pour into it the strange and dark movings of his spirit, that have nearly made him forget humanity, as though he had a finer and more joy-bestowing world of his own in which to live."

It was with such thoughts as these leading her on to her purpose that she entered the bed-chamber of Albert. But he was not there. The room was in disorder, and had not that air of neatness which was characteristic of her brother's sober and decorous manner. It was long since she had been in his apartment, and she well remembered that when last there, her eye had, as usual, been struck by the air of decorum and order that reigned around, and was so charac-

teristic of the well-organised habits of the youth. When, therefore, she saw how different was the aspect of the room on this occasion, it afforded her fresh proof of the entire change that had taken place in him whom she sought, and that something of real magnitude and impress must have effected the alteration. But another circumstance, trifling in itself, confirmed her still more strongly in this feeling. On his toilet-table stood a small box, which was so little closed, that the whole of its contents were exposed to her view. These contents were nothing but a simple locket, with a ribbon attached, for the owner to suspend from his neck. Oh, how well she knew that precious trinket! — that she did know it, that she prized it dearly, was evinced by the hundred fond kisses she bestowed upon it, as she took it from the box, and pressed it again and again to her heart and lips. — That locket contained a single lock of her poor mother's hair, — a lock that had been cut from her head when youth and happiness had left its glossy beauties unsullied,

and before the pinching hand of carking misery had cramped its texture, and made grey its raven freshness. It had been found, after her death, among the few relics that she had left behind ; and earnest had been the friendly contention between her, Seaton, and Albert, who had best title to its possession. At length, however, it had been yielded to the boy, in consideration of the heavy affliction with which nature had visited him, and in the hope that its possession might beguile some of the melancholy of his solitary hours. Dearly had he cherished it ! Warily had he hung it round his neck ! and if there was one thing in the world that he appeared to hold co-precious with the apple of his eye, it seemed to be this extant relic of his mother's person. With all these recollections rife in her mind, the finding it neglected and thrown aside, even for a moment, came over Madeline with a sort of shudder ; and the remembrance of how Albert had looked and spoken when she was most deep in her grief and indignation at De Mara's conduct with Made-

moiselle Basault, returned with renovated strength to her imagination, and threw a covering of secret dread and misgiving on the object for which she was seeking her brother. But it must be done! The task was imperative! and as she placed the priceless relic round her own neck, she resolved that obstacles should only strengthen her perseverance, and that difficulty should in like manner prompt her to more enduring resolution.

With her mind brought to this bearing, she anxiously awaited the arrival of her brother—not with that over-fed and unruly excitation of spirit that had been her "be all" on the night when she sought him for the purpose of making him the avenger of her offended love, but with a sober though full determination of so exhibiting the truth to his affection and his conscience, as to draw the mystery from the dark recesses in which he had hitherto appeared so eager to conceal it. But with all this honest strength of purpose to solace her, the hours waxed heavy to her expectation; and it was with a feeling of secret dread that

she saw the night gathering around her without witnessing Albert's return. There was a mystic solemnity pervading what she already knew of her brother's movements, which had instilled a sensation of awe into her mind in spite of the resolution of her soul, and she could not help confessing to herself that she would rather have demanded this secret in the broad and open face of day than under the gloomy influence of the silent night. It was in the name of affection and every kind feeling of the human heart that she purposed to make this demand upon the secret storehouse of her brother's soul ; and affection swelled with joy at the cheering light of day, when all nature seemed to chime in harmony with its overflowing —affection shrunk with dismay from the sombre spirit of the night that conjured dark and troublous visions in answer to its honest voice.

At length he came. Midnight and he came together. Madeline heard his light and easy step as he ascended the stairs, and she almost trembled for a moment when she felt that the time was

arrived for making this strange inquiry of an unwilling heart.

Another minute, and he was in the room. His eye, vivid and quick, seemed lighted with an elastic spirit from within, and his whole mien bespoke that mysterious satisfaction of heart, which she had noticed in him of late, and of which she was now to demand the reason.

"You are late, my Albert," cried she, willing, if possible, to establish some sort of foundation on which to build her inquiry.

"Late!" he replied; "it may be so! but I have almost forgotten how to count the hours:—when it is day, I love the day because it glitters with the sun, and makes the summer birds trill their heaven-taught lay: when it is night, I love the night, because it has silenced all things, and left me undisturbed to speak to my own soul; or if a sound be heard, it is the note of the love-sick nightingale that steals the senses away, to establish a still more exquisite one of its own production."

"But will you not sup now you are come?"

"My sister," returned the enthusiast, "I have supped."

"Where?"

"In the soft breeze of night—in the murmur of the splashing water—in the moon's light, that touches the trees, as they say the Fairies touch the sands, with gracious but ineffectual print. I have supped on the music of Heaven, and my soul is full."

"O Albert! what is this? Has your sister lost the link that bound you to her? There was a time when Madeline knew your heart, and when these things of which you speak, being enjoyed, were thought enhanced because she partook of them."

"The time that was," replied Albert, "is and shall be still. But in those days, though I gazed on the moon and watched the water's ripple, unkind nature had deafened me, and I heard not. Now my ears are full of sweet and moving sounds; and in my own estimation I am above the high

potentate that commands a million million of miserable slaves."

"Albert," exclaimed Madeline, "you have a secret at your heart—and I demand to know it."

As she spoke this, she rose from her seat, and placed herself before him with her full black eye fixed upon him, as though she would search the depths of his soul, and drag the mystery thence.

The youth started both at her words and manner. They seemed to have invaded a domain that he would have held inviolable to aught that had human shape, and he shrunk from the application. At length murmured he, "Well, be it so! say there is a secret. But let this be said too:—not a thousand tortures, more ingenious than a devil-minded man could invent, should wrest it from its hiding-place."

"I believe my brother," cried the girl with enthusiasm; "but shall not the voice of a sister who has loved as our mother bade her love, do that which no inflicted pain could accomplish? the

traveller who laughed the fury of the wind to scorn, melted from before the warm embrace of Phœbus."

"Ask it not! ask it not!" cried the other orphan, "it is the ambrosial food of my soul—the mysterious sustenance of my brain. Take my life, but take not my more than life away."

"Oh, brother, how every word you utter urges me forward in the same direction, and bids me lay my claim at the door of your heart!"

"Then I will speak no more—yes, I will be dumb, as of old I was deaf. Leave me my darling mystery sacred and untouched, and I will in voluntary act shut myself from man's commune and talk only to my secret."

"Albert," cried the maiden, drawing from her bosom the deserted relic of her mother, "do you know this locket? Look on this fragment of our lost mother, and let your heart awaken to its pristine feelings. Can you not picture me her representative? Seaton was fond of saying my voice resembled hers. Oh, imagine that it is she

who speaks! Believe that it is she who says—'Boy of my heart—of my earliest care and of my latest thought, speak to her who demands this pledge with that frankness which I bequeathed you with my blessing. Tell her the mysterious secret that threatens to sever two hearts, which, if disclosed, will be more indissolubly joined than chains of adamant could effect.'"

Albert melted into tears at this appeal to the memory of his mother: and when Madeline bade him listen to her voice as the type and semblance of hers, whose heart had ever commanded him, he looked as though some mighty contest of feeling occupied his soul, and was almost too much for human endurance to sustain.

"Oh that it should be thus!" he cried: "when music implanted the first seeds of this strange mystery in my brain, I thought that it was there to shed a perpetuity of happiness on my every moment. It was for this I fostered the growth: it was for this I shouted with high rapt joy on the night when my faculties, wound to a pitch that

promised all or nothing, caught the last link that was wanting from your impassioned features, and made sure the fulfilment of the secret."

"Is it so? Then doubly have I claim to be partaker in its mysteries. For every reason am I authorized to urge my demand for knowledge:—for no reason are you entitled to withhold the tale that even now trembles on your lips, and that your honest heart yearns to pour forth into my ear. Do you doubt your sister, Albert?"

"Rather let me doubt all honesty and truth," cried the boy, passionately. "It is not you that I doubt, but myself. Oh, Madeline, I am not the creature that I was! and the spirit of her whom you have this night invoked, could she see the change, would doubt its knowledge of me. I was gentle, and of habits formed:—now, though I trust no ungentleness marks my course, my habits have passed into air—they are non-existent. I am a creature fitful in mood, and made up of strange and overwhelming thoughts, that feel their power, but find it of such vast and un-

wieldy nature that they know not how to exercise it."

"But though you are altered, I am the same," exclaimed Madeline: "has not my bosom ever been the depository of your heart, and has not my advice ever been your consolation and pride? Again I say, I am the same; then why not so with you? A moment past, I invoked the secret in your mother's name: I now invoke it in my own—in yours. Her dying mandate requires it, and our whole hope of happiness, peace, and affection, joins the requisition."

Albert was still in tears, and each word that his sister uttered seemed to reach his heart. At length he started from his seat, and as the maiden concluded those last words he rapidly paced the room.

Suddenly he paused.—"Sister, you have conquered," cried he in a solemn voice; "but you must promise — nay, you must swear that what I reveal shall be unuttered and unhinted by you to any mortal being that moves on this living earth."

Madeline had not expected such an adjuration, and she paused; for one of her undoubted objects in pressing for the disclosure was that she might be able to meet De Mara's exceptions on that point. Still, however, she feared that should she object to what Albert required, the opportunity would be for ever lost; and she was not without hopes that, once possessed of the secret, she might be able to alter her brother's determination in this particular; or, on the other hand, the disclosure might be of such a nature as that she, as well as Albert, should be eager to have it unwhispered to living creature.

These thoughts flitted across her mind, and she exclaimed, "My brother, I promise—I swear!"

"Nay, yet more," cried the youth: "there must be mutual confidence in all things between us."

"It shall be so," returned Madeline? "it shall be as though we had exchanged minds."

"Gracious Heaven!" energetically exclaimed the orphan, as he started as though he had

trodden on some fearful object, — "Gracious Heaven! have I already disclosed the secret!"

"My brother?—"

"Did you not say that we would exchange minds? Who bade you say that? Who told you that I had the power to do it? What spirit of darkness have you been dealing with to know that the great mystery I have buried deep in my breast, enables me to transfuse one man's mind into another's receptacle for that undefined and immaterial essence?"

"Albert, Albert, what is it you say?"

"What is it you say!" exclaimed he. "Is it all a phantom of this fevered brain? or did you not hint that my secret was discovered, and that you had learned that even I, ignorant and untutored as I am, have grasped one of the most hidden mysteries of nature, and discovered the SOUL'S TRANSFUSION?"

Madeline tottered from her brother to a seat — "Is it indeed so?" murmured she, scarce consciously — "can it be! may it be!"

"Ay," said the other, more soberly, but not less rapturously: "it can! it may! it is!—ask not where the secret lies! be content to know that I have it fast locked in the cells of my brain. The vast and incessant whirl that music's magic force instituted in my soul stirred me almost to madness. Like Columbus, I knew that there was a new world awaiting my discovery, but, like him, too, I was driven desperately from sea to sea, and my whole faculty and power of perception was threatened shipwreck by the very thoughts that were hurrying me forward to the goal. But it came —at length it came. Like some sudden and momentary meteor it flashed in my mind's eye: I was dazzled with the glare, and well nigh overburdened by its magnitude; but, the first shock weathered, and the reality of the wondrous power that enlightened me recurred again and again, till my soul became accustomed to the conviction, and was capable of feeding on the unutterable thoughts that it begat."

"Can it be!" still murmured Madeline.

"I tell you — ay! — The world's vain fools will cry 'fie' upon it, and the wise in their own estimation will talk of 'out of nature;' but all their babble cannot eradicate the fact, which is ever present here. What got Socrates for his wisdom? — He was condemned to death as a dangerous innovator. What Galileo?—He incurred the lash of the Inquisitor for making the sun the centre of his system and of truth. What Columbus?—He was laughed at as a visionary, till he laid his finger on America, and said, 'Here is my answer.' Why then should I not be called visionary, and be subjected to persecution? Welcome, welcome either, both, or any thing, as long as I can lay my finger on my forehead and say, 'Here stands the man that possesses the secret of the soul's transfusion — that can change his own mind with that of any other — or can pour that which is one man's brain into another's, and reverse the operation as long as life endures.'"

CHAPTER II.

Here hope began to dawn: resolved to try,
She fixed on this her utmost remedy.

DRYDEN.

THIS, then, was the solution of the strange mysteriousness that had overhung Albert's career from almost the very day of his being made perfect in the attributes and faculties of his kind. In the knowledge of this vast and incomprehensible power lay the secret of his joyous looks, his bewildered gait, and his delighted and almost preternatural demeanour, by which he had given token of being, as it were, abstracted from

the grosser particles of this world, and cased in a machinery that outdid mere human apprehension.

But if he had evinced such unaccustomed signs of the discovery with which his mind had grappled, still more was Madeline moved by all the shows and properties of astonishment, when in the affection of his heart (to whose sovereignty he was still mortal enough to bow) he disclosed the secret which till that moment he had hugged so engrossingly within his own bosom. The brother's mind had, to a certain extent, been prepared for the possession of so unheard-of a mystery by the very facts that had led him to one feature of it after another, till the whole was made manifest to his soul: — but with the sister there had been no such marshalling of the way; she had wandered on in utter darkness till the moment of Albert's enthusiastic burst, which bore the secret, open and unreserved, on its surface; and when its knowledge was thus betrayed, and every cellule of her brain was filled, the change from dark to light, — from all that was obscure to all

that was elucidate, — was so sudden, swift, and overwhelming, that her speech seemed to be snatched from her, and the whole constitution of her mind appeared to stagger under the immensity of the burthen, which had thus in an instant been thrown upon it, unmoulded and unforewarned.

When Albert finished the words with which the last chapter concluded, a cold and heavy perspiration stood upon his brow, and he felt as one who has overstretched the natural power of his frame, and who, in proportion to the too much exertion he has undergone, sinks into too much weakness. — The secret was declared, — the mystery was clarified — and with slow and unsteady pace he sought the solitude of his own chamber, to mourn over the infracted unity of his precious discovery.

Madeline remained alone in person, but the words of her brother had afforded her a companionship of deep and inexpressible interest. Once, — and once only, — she asked herself the question — "Can this be a wild chimera?—

something as inexistent and unreal as the fabled monsters of mythology, or the pretended secrets of the dark ages?" But the habit of a young and ardent girl is not that of scepticism; and when she remembered the fire with which the words were spoken, the earnestness of soul that streamed from the narrator's eyes, the moment of doubt was dismissed — for ever dismissed from her contemplation. It only wanted this to assure her in her thoughts that were fast rising in her mind, — thoughts of wonderful contexture, and that filled her with the same living stream of delight that had already flowed so often and so bountifully through the soul of Albert.

The next morning found her bathed in the same fountain of pleasure, but it gradually began to wear a more practical appearance. The question came to her mind — "Is it not possible to make this strange discovery applicable to the same business in which Urfort is now being employed?" and an affirmative answer irresistibly offered itself to her busy imagination. Attending to the

present impulse of her mind, all that she cared about in the whole circle of human events was to ascertain beyond doubt the real tenor of the Count de Mara's feelings towards her. It was for this that she had dared the adventurous hazard of employing one of the Count's own dependents, at whose mercy she was every moment lying, and whose betrayal of her secret would necessarily tend to lower her in the estimation of him whose good opinion was more valuable to her feelings than all her earthly hopes. But how safe and how easy in the comparison was the aid that could be afforded by the employment of this mysterious agency, which was within the grasp of Albert's power! Urfort's assistance, even supposing him to be honest, and all danger on that score to be nugatory, was uncertain, and might turn out profitless, while now, on the other hand, there was offered, ready to her use, a means by which she could with mathematical precision ascertain the minutest turn of thought of which the nobleman was possessed.

Why, then, should she hesitate which of the two to adopt? Yet still hesitation there was; for she could not without an effort bring her mind to the resolution of employing so strange and unaccustomed an instrument, even to a purpose that seemed to have taken up its everlasting abode in her heart. However much it may be within human nature to love the mysterious, it is equally its characteristic to shrink from the individual exercise of it. A story of the marvellous and preternatural, employed by another, bears along with it an irresistible excitation; but, when the spirit is called on to launch itself into the unfathomable ocean, where human knowledge has never entered, and of which human experience can give no account, it involuntarily shudders at the thought of such a task, and feels cowed at the wild obscurity of the enterprise. Thus it was with Madeline. The ardent flow of words with which her brother had described the gigantic faith which she was called upon to receive, had made her bosom heave high with nervous rapture;

but when the idea of herself first undertaking the peril of practically elucidating what as yet presented itself only as a beauteous theory to her imagination, was forced upon her mind by the tempting prospect of discovering beyond doubt, and beyond denial, the actual current of thought that ran through De Mara's soul, her heart acknowledged a tremor, which even the single empire of the impulse that was upon her was unable altogether to subdue. All eager, and all zealous as she was, she hesitated — for the first time in her life she hesitated. Hitherto we have seen how the vehemence of her spirit caused her instantly to leap to the execution that was proposed, without giving one moment's consideration to what might follow. It was this that had involved her in a quarrel with her uncle; — it was this that had made her so harshly dismiss Wahrend at the cottage-door, and so unjustifiably feed him with hopes on his re-appearance at Geneva ;—it was this that had made her so heedlessly avail herself of Urfort's services in the prosecution

of her design upon the Count. But this time she hesitated. And why? It was not a looking forward to the consequences; — it was not a weighing or a balancing of the advantages to be derived against the ill that might possibly accrue. No; — it was, that her mind, powerful, ardent, romantic, and headlong as it was, could not all at once muster the great and last stretch of resolution which that human being must have who shall dare to overstep the seemingly prescribed bounds of nature, and enter on a world unknown, undefined, and uninvestigated.

Thus, for a while, she doubted. Thus, things of another world held her in suspense; but in proportion as they were obscure and indefinite, they allowed her thoughts to range, and give them what aspect they would. In the meanwhile her disposition was stationary; and while her buoyant fancy enabled her gradually to abstract what was gloomy and threatening in the picture of which Albert had been the original inventor, (though she was the composer and filler up of

the canvass,) her eager spirit, ever at work and on the alert, was urging her forward to the undertaking.

It was resolved. The last faint clouds of doubtful agitation were dispelled by the brightness of her hope; and the sky seemed clear and promising to her expectant heart. Yes, the soul of De Mara should be probed by the infallible and mysterious test, which, through Albert, she had within her control; and the puny and underling assistance of her former coadjutor should be foregone, as insignificant, and even ridiculous, when compared with the mighty touchstone she was about to wield.

Scarcely was this important resolution concluded in her mind, when Urfort entered. He was an unwelcome visiter, for he reminded her of a rash step that she had adopted, and for which, now that this change in her power had taken place, there was not even the apology of utility to offer. When, therefore, she perceived his entry, the first impression of her mind was to get rid of

him as rapidly as she could, in order that she might, if possible, get rid of the reminiscence to which his presence gave rise, and abandon herself to the pure, unshackled speculations which the knowledge of Albert's secret infused into her imagination.

"Do you bring any message from the Count?" demanded she, in reply to his rustic bow.

"No, my Lady," answered the man; "it was at your bidding — not at my Lord's, that I came this morning. I thought that perhaps, though I had not much to say, I might as well run here to tell that little while he was dressing."

"Not to-day!—not to-day!—Never mind for the present!" — returned Madeline, in a hasty manner; — "but — but — perhaps you may have heard the Count say what his intentions for the day are?"

"I know that he said to the Chevalier Altoz, who breakfasted with him, that he hardly knew what his intentions were, for the unpleasant reflections which the conduct of Master Albert—"

"How dare he throw blame on conduct so unimpeachable?" interrupted the girl, with vehemence in her manner: "the conduct of Albert may be too lofty for comprehension, but I vouch its admirable excellence."

Urfort knew not how to reconcile this speech with her spontaneous admission at their last interview, that there was something in her brother's behaviour that required explanation; but at all events it served to put him on his guard, and he proceeded cautiously—"Nay, Ma'm'selle, I do but repeat what I heard said while I waited at the breakfast-table; but perhaps I had better not tell what the Chevalier replied to my Lord's complaint."

"Yes, yes," answered she, "let me hear all, if it leads to any conclusion as to when I may see De Mara. I well know Altoz is no friend of mine; and therefore *his* remarks cannot wound me."

"I am glad you know that, for I thought it very ill-natured of him when he said that the

best thing my master could do, was to give up the matter altogether; and then he laughed and said, ' Do but pay a visit to Madrid, and I will answer for your finding beauties enough there to make up for your loss here.' "

" And the Count—the Count—what said he? —Quick, on your life tell me every syllable he uttered in reply!"

" That 's just what I am not able to tell you, Miss," said the other, warily pausing in the right place, " for at that moment I was sent down stairs for some *bon-bons*, and when I returned with them, I found the Chevalier had risen to take his leave."

" My good fellow," said Madeline, after a minute's pause, during which she seemed to be taking counsel of her thoughts, " I can now tell you the whole service that I require at your hands. It amounts to this—that I should have an interview with your master without fear of interruption."

" I am sure you need only write to the Count for that."

"Nay, nay, that will not do. When I say 'without fear of interruption,' I—I—mean that even he himself must not have the power to interrupt me.—You seem not to understand me; yet it is plain enough. Cannot you contrive that I—and perhaps my brother—should have admission to him when he is taking his *siesta* after dinner? Introduce me to him as he sleeps."

"My Lady!" exclaimed the seeming menial.

"I mean no harm, good Urfort," cried the Orphan, scanning the astonished countenance of her listener;—"I mean good to all. On the faith of Heaven, nought else!—Assist me then in this, and your task shall be at an end, to be rewarded to the utmost of my ability."

"I do not doubt your intention, of course, Lady, for I am sure that never would you do any thing to bring a poor fellow into trouble. But how is this to be done? There are a thousand things to prevent it,—none to assist it."

"Be it your care to employ Jacotot, and the rest will be easy."

"But supposing my Lord should awake while you are in the room?"

"That can easily be prevented by an opiate, which you may mix in his wine when you help him during the dinner-service."

"Well, my Lady, I can't but say that I am afraid of the job. But I should be sorry to let my cowardice stand in the way of your happiness and my Lord's; and I am sure that you would not attempt any thing that did not mean that."

"Right, right!" cried Madeline, enthusiastically: "the angels be my witness that I seek nought else,—that I pray for nought else."

"Then I will see what I can do:—perhaps it may happen, now that I wait so much upon his Lordship, that Monsieur Jacotot may get a holiday, and then the coast will be clear."

"If so, the better. But the thing must be done immediately: to-day, it is too late, I fear; but to-morrow—yes, to-morrow,—suspense and I must shake hands for ever."

"To-morrow, Lady! Well, I can but try; and

at all events you shall see me in the morning to know how far I have succeeded."

Urfort was too happy to be released not to take the first opportunity of making his escape; and he was too full of the strange and unaccountable variation in Madeline's demeanour not to hurry to the Count's hotel, and lay before him a statement of what he was able to describe, but not to explain.

"By Janus and all his double-faced posterity!" continued he, after narrating to the astonished De Mara the conversation which had taken place between himself and the maiden,—"the girl has this time fairly won my heart, and I should be proud to be the father of such a piece of fear-nothing resolution. It did my whole spirit good to watch her manner, and observe how she made a proposition, the bare mention of which would send nine-tenths of her sex into hysterics, with a coolness that would have been creditable to our Fifth Harry at Agincourt, when he turned out his handful of brave souls against I know not how

many thousands of your countrymen. But what the devil does it all mean? There's the beauty of it. It is as pleasant as a conundrum over a sea-coal Christmas fire;—and for myself, I intend to allow a whole week to find out the riddle of it."

"I hope not," said the Count; "for every thing I hear about the maiden serves to show me that there is not a moment to be lost; and I think it would be as well, if you would look at the thing in the same light, or your second hundred louis are likely to remain in the mines of Peru."

"But what think you, most excellent patron, is the meaning of this new freak of her fancy?"

"Psha! I think it means nothing, and that it is, as you say, merely a new freak of her fancy. We have no time to trouble our heads about the whims of a romantic girl: she must be carried, Master Urfort—she must be carried; for I am well-nigh tired of this see-saw of do-nothing, and am determined that this next week, which you so judiciously proposed dedicating to the discovery of this childish enigma, shall make her mine."

" Nay, I never intended wasting a minute of real business-time on such a pursuit, but only meant that I would keep it by me to give a relish to my visit to Kobolt's black corks when each day's work is over. And now what would your Lordship have me do ? "

" In the first place a thorough negative must be put on this ridiculous crotchet in which she would have employed you ; and in the next I would have you follow up the project in which you took Altoz's name *not* in vain, as I hope. Let her be brought to imagine that I am on the eve of bidding farewell to her and Geneva, and the thing must come to a crisis."

This plan seemed to coincide with Urfort's views, and the two worthies occupied themselves in discussing its various bearings, in order that the latter, in his next interview with the Orphan, might be prepared to drop such hints as should hurry her on to action, without affording her any period for deliberation. The peculiar vocation to which De Mara had devoted himself since

he had felt the force of woman's charms, enabled him to suggest almost every possible contingency or difficulty that might arise ; nor did his assistant display less knowledge, though on a broader and more unrefined scale, in the same untwisting and making simple the knots of intrigue ; so that, before they separated, Urfort felt himself more entirely master of his position than he had hitherto been, and the Count gave him his *congé* for the night, in the full assurance that enough was arranged to impel Madeline irresistibly forward into the snare that was prepared for her entrapment.

In the mean time Madeline, having formed her resolution, and having also, as she thought, smoothed the way for its successful accomplishment, waited with impatience for the arrival of her brother, that she might apprise him of the manner in which she designed to make this first use of his arcanum. But though she had to wait for his coming, the intervening time she did not deem ill employed in pourtraying

to her fanciful spirit the various ways in which the service of this potent agent would give her the mastery over De Mara; and when she remembered the ungentle advice which Altoz had proffered in temptation of her lover's loyalty, tenfold and twenty-fold did she rejoice that she was possessed of the wherewithal to balance so invidious a makeweight, and hold up a mirror in which the exact line and boundary of the Chevalier's influence should be reflected to a nicety.

With these feelings deep-seated in her bosom, and her soul alive with all the eagerness of an end to be accomplished, her meeting with Albert that night seemed to presage auspiciously, and give pleasant note of preparation forerunning her success. That her brother would consent to her proposition she had not for a moment doubted; and when, instead of seeking his own chamber with stealthy pace, he came directly into the apartment where she was in the habit of sitting, and appeared before her with cheerful face and a light heart painted in his countenance, she hailed

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these signs as excellent omens of her suggestion being received by him with the same unity of sentiment that it had afforded to her own heart.

"Madeline," said the enthusiast, as he placed himself by her side, "I am but a wayward creature; and yet I trust that the end will show that the purpose of my mind is faithful, and that I am about to acknowledge no principle which has not honesty of intention for its beginning and its finish."

"What means my brother?"

"I mean," replied Albert, "an apology to my sister for what may have appeared strange, but was not intended so. When the mystery, of which you last night witnessed the explication, was hanging over my faculties in all the darksome grandeur of obscurity — or when it burst forth on that night when your wild and uncontrolled expression of features lent it a flame by which its beacon-piles, wanting only that, were set a-blaze—was it wonder, was it marvel that the young and unformed mind of a scarcely more

than boy should be bewildered in the vast labyrinths that such a subject at once threw open to his consideration? And when last night your searching and heart-wringing words tore the secret from the receptacle in which I fondly hoped that it was for ever buried, was it matter of surprise that I should mourn over the lost singleness of my knowledge? Let this, Madeline, be the key to what is passed; and since it is destined that in the details of this wonderful unhinging of the door that Nature has established for the soul of man, we are to go hand in hand, from this moment let my chary and abstemious eagerness to have the secret all my own be forgotten between us, that we may, with the more real and lasting enjoyment, whisper to each other the wild thoughts that our joint knowledge will originate! Let the unsharing dream of my youthful blood be forgiven! Let my uncouth demeanour, my solitary wanderings, my unwise avoidance of the open confidence of a sister's heart be forgiven and forgotten! Henceforth we will be one, single and indissoluble, even as

though we had practised this great mystery on ourselves, and each had received the other's soul transfused. Excuse these many words, my sister, —accept them in apology of my past silence,— and let the Orphans of Unwalden hereafter live, as they were bidden in those last and touching sentences of our uncle's letter."

Madeline listened to her brother's address with the profoundest attention: each word that dropped from his lips made her heart more and more glad, for she saw in them, as she thought, the free pledges and forerunners of his acceptation of the proposition she was about to make.

But he ceased ; and she replied, "Enough, and too much, my brother. In all that you have described I recognise but the simple dictates of nature, and cannot feel that I have a right to utter one word of reproach ;—most sure I am that I have no inclination to do so. It was not till last night that the true test of your heart's affection was applied ; and believe me I feel not only satisfied, but grateful at the result."

"My own sister," exclaimed the youth, "I

had but to explain the truth to receive her heart. That which I have said, therefore, was rather in acquittance of my own conscience, than in doubt of your feeling: but it is past—never to be revived. And now, what of this strange mystery that I grasp ?"

"Do you think you can bear to talk of it fully and freely ?"

"It is to that that I have been tutoring my mind. I shall not be surprised if at first it shrinks from the touch of another person's thoughts:—but you know all; and will therefore understand how to make allowance, should it involuntarily shudder. If I have been able to probe my own feelings, it will come upon me as when the first chords of music penetrated my ear: it was a sweet pain, a thrilling agony; but the first assault endured, the suffering gave way, and delight and ecstacy alone remained."

"So it shall be here," cried Madeline, "if the kind voice of affection may do as much. Let us put it to the proof on the instant, and teach one

another the inestimable value of the gift you have bestowed on me."

"That has been the chief thought with which I have fed my soul from the first moment of the discovery. The idea of how many minds I would peruse — how many actions I would scan by their true touchstone, the brain—how many magnificent movements of the soul I would enjoy—came over me like some vast fairy vision of delight, and my whole imagination was in a state of rapture. Teach me how to improve this, my sister, and I will worship you."

"At least I can counsel you to make what is now only imaginary, a reality and a fact. I would have you throw aside the mere ebullitions of your fancy, fevered as it is by the excitement of this strange business, and ascertain in good earnest of what stuff this mystery is made."

"What would you have me do?"

"I would have you say, 'Let this thing be.' I do not ask the process by which you may accomplish it. I will not seek to examine too deeply

the chain which enables you to hold the more essential part of man under dominion, and to transgress the ordinary laws of nature; I only desire to witness its practical effects—to feel its actual operation."

"Ask it not yet," exclaimed the youth, — "ask it not yet! Do not think that I am wanting in moral courage when I confess, that at the contemplation of making this principle effective, my whole nature seems reluctant to the task. I know that I have the power;—I feel it mighty within my breast; but some sensation, unutterable and undefinable, seizes on my mind when I say to myself, 'The time is come: I will prove this mystery.'"

"There is no matter for surprise in this," returned Madeline; "but that which you feel is but a morbid shrinking from the necessity that there will be to string your whole soul to the whole labour. I can well imagine that to do this requires an effort; but it is an effort that must be undertaken, and the longer you allow yourself to

linger on the borders, the more irresistibly will this feeling take possession of your mind."

"You have in part described," said the other orphan, "whence arises this emotion: but you have not yet arrived at the more impressive feature that holds me back. My secret is my mistress — my bride! I am wedded to it, heart and soul: I have endowed it with my richest and most worthy thoughts; and it is because I have done this that I shrink from holding it up to the glare of day, and challenging the gaze of the world's folly, or the world's wisdom. It is the chosen of my heart, and I cannot endure that it should be public to the examination of all who please to pass their comments on it."

"I do not think," replied the maiden, "that this is a different feature, but a portion of the same. Once summon the energy to make the mystery practical, and you will find that both will disappear at the exercise of the one effort."

"But will the practice reward me for its use? The world is not so full of excellence as I thought

it on the day that Valdi gave me my hearing. I walked abroad, and heard a hapless female, whose face alone bespoke the deepness of her want, ask alms, for pity's sake, of a trim and gallant Master; and while I could have wept at the accent of her voice as she spoke of 'pity,' he whom she addressed stalked on, with his head high in air, as if he heard her not: and then I pitied him, for I thought that this well-dressed walker had, like me, been born deaf, and never met with a Valdi to give him the blessing that Nature had denied;—but he was not deaf, for presently he met a friend, and they chatted and laughed, while still the poor creature stood at hand, and made my ears ache at her tremulous tones. This was my first lesson in the world's ways, but it has not been my last; and again and again I tremble lest a particle of my priceless secret should be whispered in such callous and unhallowed ears."

"This is going into the other extreme," observed Madeline; "for it does not necessarily

follow, that, because you so far unlock the mystery as to make it practical in one instance, all the world will be informed of its existence. Let me be the subject on whom you operate—you shall not find me tremble or shrink ; and when the experiment is over, and I am restored to the original action of my own mind, whom safer could you have to investigate as to the effects that so wonderful a transfusion must induce ? "

" Perhaps it may be so," replied the brother ; " but at least let me have further time for its consideration."

" No, Albert, no ; it is from that which I wish to drive you. Why should you pause when you grasp the power, and when I am ready and willing to be the instrument ? We must on—we must on, for my soul is on fire to enter on such unknown regions, and to be able to canvass the hidden secrets of its neighbour. I scarce know the mysteries of my own brain ; — then how strange and wonderful will it be to enter upon those of another—take possession of the contents

that till then lay fast locked within, and peruse in distinct character all that nature and disposition has there inscribed !"

Albert's eyes kindled as his sister described a portion of those thoughts which had so long and so fully occupied his own brain; and catching an equal ardour with her own he exclaimed, "It shall be ! it shall be !" Then again he wavered, as if still unable to conquer the aversion that he had to rob his mind of the abstract theory that possessed it; and he continued in a tone more subdued,—"But you forget, my sister; there must be a second party to this proceeding. Where are we to find one whom we may trust, and who will be willing to undergo the experiment ?"

"I have already foreseen that question," replied Madeline, who was delighted at the prospect of having her scheme against the Count crowned with success—"I have already foreseen that question, and have made my choice."

Albert looked at her uneasily as he exclaimed, "The name ! The name !"

"The Count de Mara," replied the sister resolutely.

"No, no," cried the other, "never will I consent to such a selection. What! put my dear, my precious secret, that lies in my heart and excludes all other thoughts, in the power of De Mara! Rather would I foreswear its ecstacy and raptures for ever! Rather would I banish it henceforth from my mind! Rather would I be again made deaf and unconscious of the more excellent delights of which hearing only can partake!"

"But you have not heard the whole of my plan," said Madeline; "like yourself, I feel so envious of the secret, that I would not have it whispered to another living being. I have not therefore proposed that De Mara should be its participator, but that he should be the unconscious instrument."

"Unconscious instrument!"

"Yes; we will steal upon him when he sleeps. Let transfusion then take place; and how is it possible that he will know what has happened? At the worst, he will but wake in the fancy that

he has had some wild and incoherent dream ; and the real solution of the mystery will for ever remain hidden from him."

" I like it not," replied the brother, " nor can I in any way bring my mind to contemplate De Mara's having any share whatever in the matter. He has ever been too wise and cunning for both of us ; and if I do not hate him, at least I fear him, and will never put what is more precious than life itself within the possibility of his reach."

" But every thing is prepared for the plan I have proposed," exclaimed the maiden.

" Heaven and earth !" cried the other with emotion, " surely he knows nothing yet ! Surely not one syllable has been breathed by which he can trace my power ! Oh, Madeline, I had hoped that when he so deeply injured you, and gave you proof how he could wantonly neglect and even torture you, that he had sown that within your bosom which could not so easily be forgiven."

" I have not forgiven him," cried the girl ; " and it is because I have not that I make this proposition. Besides the soul-stirring wish that I have

to trace this mystery to the very uttermost, I would penetrate by its means the hidden cogitations of De Mara's bosom, for it is by that alone that I can learn how to deal with him."

" Leave him and his cogitations alone, my sister ; and deal with him only through the medium of a silent contempt. On this, too, rely ; the more you come in contact with him, the more he will gain mastery over you,—and your only safeguard, therefore, is his avoidance."

" It cannot be," exclaimed Madeline ; " I have bound myself to the labour of meeting his endeavours ; and it must be done. I now call on you to assist me in this attempt with your mighty and mysterious power : I demand your aid as your sister and the sharer in your secret."

" No, no, no !" returned Albert hastily : " on De Mara my discovery shall never be practised. Each day I sicken more and more at the very mention of his name ; and no power on earth shall bring me to make the experiment that you require at my hands."

" Be not rash, Albert," cried his sister ; " you

cannot doubt my affection or my love :—let me not then have occasion to doubt yours. Exercise your power as I would have it, or cast me off at once: I know no medium; nor can I understand those nicer distinctions of feeling that lead you to refuse, and to couple with so cruel a refusal a pretence of kind-heartedness which cannot in such company be really entertained."

"Are these words to me?" exclaimed the brother; "and dare you doubt my affection? Do you remember last night? Do you remember how I tore in pieces the web that my fancy had woven around my discovery for the purpose of admitting you within its precincts? Do you remember but ten minutes ago, when I gave up the sanctity and fine abstraction of my secret in obedience to your prayer to make it practical and effective? And after this, can you—dare you doubt my affection?"

"Prove its entireness by yielding this last point; or let me have none of it."

"You have my answer," cried Albert; "never shall De Mara be instrumental to the development of transfusion."

" Then never will Madeline have faith in such half-love and affection. Rather would she wander, alone and unbrothered, over the surface of the globe ! Rather would she penetrate the entanglements of some unexplored forests, till she arrived where man's foot never yet trod, frightening the solitude of unnumbered ages with her exclamations, ' I have no brother !—I have no friend !' Albert, farewell !" and with disappointment in her manner, and anger deep-seated on her brow, she quitted the room.

The youth looked after her with astonishment. He would have stopped her ; but he knew not with what words, or with what comfort. To risk the possibility of De Mara being a sharer in his discovery, his every feeling forbade :—to persuade his sister under the present vehement impulse of her spirit to give up the proposition, was hopeless and not to be entertained. Albert, therefore, though he would have stopped her, could not : all he might do was to watch her hasty but deep-resolved steps; and as she closed the door he felt his heart sink within him. It was not in his nature

to refuse any thing to Madeline; and though a firm and thorough conviction informed him that in being thus determined he had adopted the more judicious course, he felt as if his conscience half reproached him for having so perseveringly withstood her prayer. What had passed was a sad and grievous prelude to the all-relying confidence which but half an hour before he had been proposing to his sister; and though he stole forth again to seek his late prized solitude, he could not help doubting whether he should now reap from it that single and entire enjoyment, which for the last month it had bestowed on his delighted feelings.

CHAPTER III.

So ready to be gone! Barbarian, stay!
He 's gone, and love returns and pride gives way.
Oh, stay! Come back!

GRANVILLE.

THE next morning Madeline found the usual hour of Urfort's daily visit fast approaching, but she knew not how to receive him. He would come with hopeful words on his lips to give her to understand that the train was laid to secure her secret visit to the Count's apartments, while she who was the chief plotter and mover of the scheme was unprepared and unable to make use of the opportunity that would be brought to her very hands.

And why was it that she had failed in the attempt? Angry as she was with her brother, her candour, however distorted by the influence of displeasure, would not allow her to deny his general kindliness of nature;—and yet she had failed in the most important request she had ever urged upon his heart. Why was this?—Either she must have asked that which it was even beyond Albert's affection to grant, or she must have pressed it upon him on grounds that failed in making the requisite impression on his mind. The first of these alternatives she would not—could not—admit; for so necessary did her request still appear to her to be for the well-being of her connexion with De Mara, that her whole impulse and feeling forbade the confession that she had gone beyond the boundary of what she might demand or her brother might grant. The second seemed more admissible, for her conscience could not deny that she had put before Albert for his consideration a motive—not the true one. Why should she have disguised the fact? Why should she not have told the real state of her heart, and have confessed that with all De Mara's slights

and neglect, she loved him still? It was true that no human being cares to stand convicted on self-confession of a weakness or a want of sustaining the proper dignity of their person; but, on the other hand, had she described to her brother the perturbed and wretched state in which her whole faculties were placed by the harassing suspense in which the nobleman had kept her for the last week, the rebuff she had received at his hands would have been spared; and at that very moment when she was deploring the failure of her enterprise, they would probably have been deep in council together for the furtherance of an object, which would bring the genuine condition of her lover's professions within her knowledge and comprehension.

What then was there which prevented her adopting, though late, this straightforward policy with her brother, and relying on the kindness of his heart to confirm what the yearning of her spirit demanded? One circumstance, and one alone, seemed to stand in the way of such a measure. Her behaviour to Wahrend in his presence, since the renewal of their conviction, had undoubtedly

been such as to lead her brother to believe that he had always been entitled to a favourable position in her bosom : she had been able to perceive in Albert's manner towards the Swiss a sort of self-gratulation that he had stepped in to put the pretensions of the nobleman to flight ; and the conscience of Madeline could not help admitting that so far from intervening to correct this error of her brother's apprehension, she had rather fed the mistake by at once admitting Wahrend to all his former privileges of acquaintanceship, and by again inducing him to confess the passion which he had first learned to entertain for her at Unwalden. With what face, then, would she be able to confess to her brother that her affections were irrevocably bestowed upon the Count, when she well knew that her conduct towards the Swiss had strongly impregnated the youth's mind with the hope that his old friend was to be the successful candidate for her favour ? and how could she throw herself upon his fraternal bounty, when the first word he would have to utter in reply, would be a reproach for the ungenerous deception she

had exercised towards himself, and the most cruel hopes with which she had nurtured his friend's pretensions? It was true that the manner in which she had given Wahrend his *congé* on the morning of her first interview with Urfort, as well as that in which she had received Albert's intercession in his behalf, might have somewhat shaken the faith of the latter as to the certain success of the former; but, nevertheless, she could not flatter herself that Albert had really arrived at the motive which had induced her to lend a willing ear to the revival of Wahrend's tale of love.

But still, with all this heavy account against her, might she not hope for her brother's succour when she should lay before him a candid display of the errors and impulses of her heart? To defend the encouragement that she had been giving to the Swiss was impossible—to palliate was perhaps hardly within her power:—but at all events she could present it with the misgivings and reproaches of a contrite heart to Albert's notice; she could herself be the first to condemn what no human subtlety could justify; and the error com-

mitted, she could repent, like her first mother, and exclaim—

> " Bereave me not,
> Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
> Thy counsel, in this uttermost distress,
> My only strength and stay; forlorn of thee,
> Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?" *

The false step that she had made was a grievous one: but, though late, she might retrieve it to a certain extent, and, casting around her the mantle of contrition, hope to conceal the deformity that she had voluntarily assumed under the dominion of her hasty temperament.

But the essence of repentance lies in deeds, not words. What would Albert require at her hands in proof of the earnestness of her sorrowing; and could she not by forerunning that requisition present to him the best evidence of her sincerity?—Wahrend had been most unfairly dealt with. It would be mainly on his behalf that her brother could complain. Through Wahrend therefore must emanate the peace-offering which she

* Paradise Lost.

would proffer to her brother. But how might this be accomplished? Affection she could not tender to the Swiss; for it was the mighty predominance of that feeling towards De Mara that was urging her to the humiliations which she proposed, but to which her high spirit could hardly stoop, though her conscience insisted on their justice, and her judgment was decisive in favour of their wisdom. Wahrend, however, had a noble and undeviating candour of mind:—from his lips reproach had never come, when in the injustice of her anger she had, on quitting Unwalden, forbade him her presence; and in the whole of his intercourse with her he had shown that a manly straightforwardness of demeanour, joined to a simple but earnest desire to deserve well of her, had been the motive and principle upon which his character was grounded. Why, then, should she not make the same confession to him, that a minute before she had resolved to make to Albert? Why should she not tell him that her heart was unable to love—that her soul was bleeding for the unkind deceit she had practised—but that to show she was not utterly unworthy, she had at least honesty enough

left to throw herself upon his generosity, to implore his forgiveness, and even to hope, in bidding him farewell for ever, he might endeavour to forget the past in the tardy justice that had brought her to this confession?—She would do this!—She would make this painful but just avowal of her fault to the honest-hearted Swiss, who, in meeting the candour of her bosom by a more than equal candour in his own, would become the best and most effectual surety that she could offer to Albert in earnest of the sincerity of her feelings.

Her mind having adopted this resolution, she was better at ease with herself,—not because her labours were at an end, but because she thought she saw an effectual way in which to meet the difficulties that presented themselves. It required an effort to bring herself to consent to relate the real truth to Wahrend; but when she remembered how unfairly she had led him on to his present position, she felt that such a course was the only apology or extenuation within her reach; and the frankness of her disposition, ever ready to teach her justice as the vehemence of her passions to

lead her astray, summoned her to a task which womanly reserve would have bidden her shun.

She was half-debating in her mind whether she would send to request Wahrend's presence, or take the chance of his calling in the course of the day, when Urfort made his appearance.

" I hardly know," said he, as soon as he had executed his usual bow at the door,—" I hardly know whether I shall be welcome to-day, Miss; for I can make nothing of this *siesta* business. I am afraid it must be a wiser head than mine to manage it—at all events in such a hurry."

" There is no great hurry, good Urfort," replied the maiden, somewhat mournfully; " take the next day or two to think of it, and perhaps by that time you may be more successful."

" I am glad of that," cried he, and he spoke the words with true sincerity, for he had hardly known how to meet the Orphan so as to get rid of her request for the present, and introduce the real object of his visit ;—" I am glad of that, for a day or two may make all the difference. But I was afraid you would not hear of it: so that I should almost have scarcely cared to venture here this

morning, but that my master has sent me with a letter to you."

"A letter to me!" exclaimed the maiden, as she took the paper offered by the man; "I like not these letters! Why does not De Mara come himself?"

No reply was made to this by Urfort; and, indeed, Madeline did not seem to expect any. It was, as it were, a question addressed to her own musing spirit, as she held the missive from the Count unopened in her hand, apparently unwilling to receive so poor a substitute for him whom her eyes longed to behold, and her heart to welcome.

At length the seal was broken, and she read these words:—

"Dearest Madeline,

"Several days have now elapsed since I have allowed myself the pleasure of seeing you. Day after day an unconquerable hesitation and reluctance have prevented my explaining the reason of this. One moment I have determined to seek an interview—another to write, that I might not embarrass you with an unexpected statement. I

feel, however, that this duty in one shape or the other has become imperative upon me, and I have preferred the latter, that you may not think it is my intention to take you by surprise.

"The cause of my absence is Albert! Do not think that, in saying this, I am about to alarm your affectionate feelings towards your brother by bringing any accusation against him. Far be it from me to wish or to dare to take such a step. But we are all to a certain extent more or less the creatures of the world; and those who rank highest in it are perhaps more its creatures than those whose humble lot allows them to pass through the mazes of life unnoticed and unobserved.

"I need not point out to you, that since your brother's happy restoration to hearing, some strange and unexplained principle of action has guided his whole career. I observed it myself, but chose to make no remark, fondly hoping that it would escape the observation of others; but such has not been the case. More than one of my friends have spoken to me with great seriousness on the subject; and, what is still more painful, some most officious person, I find, has been

writing to my uncle, the Duc de Montaison, on whom, as you well know, much of my future prospects depends. Two days ago I received a letter from that nobleman, informing me that he was given to understand that the brother of the young lady to whom I was attached was pursuing a most extraordinary career—that he had refused the assistance, and even the companionship, of the musical professor with whom he had been provided—that his movements were altogether unaccountable—that he stole out of the city at all hours—that he was absent from home in the depth of the night—and that, in fact, he had attracted so much suspicious attention, that my uncle was informed the police of the place had thought it to be their duty to establish a watch upon his motions. 'These are strange things,' continues the Duke, 'and must be examined. The Count de Mara, a peer of the French empire, and the possible heir of the Duc de Montaison, has high duties to perform; and he must be wary, lest, in early life, one of his first and most important steps should involve him with parties whose faults will be by the world identified with himself.'

"These, dearest Madeline, are the Duc de Montaison's own words. What am I to do? I do not pretend to find fault on my own behalf—I do not pretend to demand any explanation; but, on the other hand, this is certain,—that the Duke, both on his own account and on mine, has a right to demand explanations of me; and these explanations I have it not in my power to give.

"The Duke is not a little alarmed by the accounts he has heard, as you will easily understand, when I inform you that he insists upon my journeying to Paris instantly, in order that his mind may be satisfied by a personal inquiry of me into the circumstances.

"Again I must repeat—what am I to do? and how am I to meet my uncle's investigation?

"Yours, dearest Madam,

"Very devotedly,

"De Mara."

What a letter! Every word as she read it, seemed to penetrate deeper and deeper into her brain, and to leave a more searching mark behind. But, agonizing as the words were, they were not

half so agonizing as the fact that the charge contained in the letter was founded in truth. A mystery there was!—an explanation there ought to be!—but that explanation she was bound by solemn promises neither to give nor to hint at.

Might not Albert, under such circumstances, be induced to relax somewhat of her vow of concealment! But, alas! there was no time for execution to bear out such a hope. She had parted from him in anger, and he was wandering through the solitudes the neighbourhood of Geneva afforded, to feed his thoughts with that joy which his sister had refused him; and it might be night, or it might be even morning, before he again made his appearance at his lodgings!

Yet something must be done!—some sort of answer must be sent! But what should that answer be?

The letter threatened departure. It was evident that it was hinted at throughout, though not openly avowed. On her reply would rest the balance. How could it be phrased to stay his motions?

Alas! she knew not. Her every faculty was

afloat to invent the measure; but they were in so mingled a state of turmoil and confusion, that they did nothing but feed upon and repeat the question—"How could she stay his motions?" without offering a single suggestion in reply.

Yet to think of his departure was madness—to think of his going to bow to the influence of such a man as his uncle was more than madness; for often had De Mara told her that it was only under his repeated solicitations that the Duke had consented to his proposals to her, and the letter of that uncle too plainly showed what his commands would be.

Well, she would write! But, in spite of her determination, it was with unsteady hand that her pen traced these words:—

"The Count de Mara demands an explanation which Madeline cannot give; but of this she is convinced—that if the Count will but postpone the journey which she presumes is hinted at by his letter, her brother will, on his return this evening or to-morrow morning, undoubtedly afford any elucidation that may be necessary to those

movements which she thanks the Count for not receiving in the suspicious light which some ill-wisher of hers has endeavoured to force upon the Duc de Montaison."

The letter was no sooner finished than she gave it to Urfort, as if glad to be rid of so painful a subject:—"Go back with the answer immediately," cried she; "but at all hazards you must return hither, that I may know in what manner it is received by the Count."

"But suppose, my Lady,—"

"Suppose nothing!" interrupted she, angrily: "you must return hither, for it is life and death to me to know what symptoms of resolution De Mara evinces on his perusal of my answer. Quick, quick,—go with it;—for I shall be labouring under a thousand tortures till I see you back here again."

Well might she describe her mind as labouring under a thousand tortures! A young girl, without compass or rudder, she had been thrown upon the sea of passion; and the strange whirl of events that she had had to contend with during the last few days had become almost too much for the

capability of her faculties. Reason, the only guide that could have assisted her through so troublous a navigation, was overborne by the tide of sensations to which the headlong nature of her disposition allowed full force and power; and each new change of circumstance that had been hurried upon her, was driving her still further and further from all opportunity of regaining her former means of prudence and caution.

De Mara threatened immediate departure! In that thought alone there were a myriad of sharp-pointed daggers gathering round her heart. If he once quitted Geneva, farewell hope, farewell success, farewell happiness; for dread despair would enter as he went out, and render the city the abode of misery and wretchedness!—Of what avail then would be the boasted power, which, through Albert, she had hoped to hold over the secrets of his soul? Of what effect this preternatural research into the hidden things of his heart, when he had fled from her neighbourhood to bow before the dictates of an inexorable uncle?

But still there were hopes — there must be hopes:—for to think, even for a moment, that there were none, was placing the hand of death

upon her heart, and giving the only object of her soul to annihilation. Her letter promised fair, at least, to stay his progress till an interview had been had with Albert;—and to one of two points she was resolved to bring her brother,—either to afford a sufficient explanation to De Mara,—or to consent to an immediate use of his arcanum in the way that she had already fruitlessly urged upon him.

In putting together such thoughts as these, in which hope and fear held alternate dominion over her, she passed the time till Urfort made his re-appearance.

"Do you bring an answer from the Count de Mara?" exclaimed she, the moment he entered the room.

The man shook his head, as if the action was intended to forerun the reply, and then said, "I heard nothing about any answer, unless indeed—"

"Unless what?" cried Madeline, who perceived that he paused in what he was about to say.

"Why, my Lady," continued he, "when I got to the hotel, I found the Chevalier Altoz with my

master; and the Chevalier was insisting on the risk which the Count was running, in not having sooner obeyed the letter that he had received from the Duc de Montaison."

"Ay, ay," muttered Madeline, "I thought I knew who one of the Count's disinterested friends was, that were urging my brother's conduct upon his notice. But what said he to my letter?"

"The Count, after reading it himself, gave it to the Chevalier to read."

"Indeed! Oh, Madeline, how low thou art fallen in thy estate!" and then with an effort she demanded,—"and what was Altoz good enough to say in its favour?"

"I did not hear him say any thing in its favour, Ma'm'selle; for, after he had read it, he went on to contend more than ever that the Count was bound to set off immediately for Paris; because, as he said, to wait in the expectation that Master Albert would submit to an examination, was an absurdity."

"And what said the Count?"

"Why, I did not hear much that he said, for, while the Chevalier was going on at this rate, I

was sent down stairs ; but presently after that the bell rang, and I went up again ;—and then the Count told me that I was to bid Monsieur Jacotot prepare a portmanteau for his instant departure, and that the rest of his luggage was to be got ready to follow after him : and then, as I thought I was not likely to hear any thing further, I came away to you."

"You have heard quite enough," exclaimed the Orphan, with anguish in her voice ;—"and I too much ! Go, go, good fellow ; I have no further occasion for you. And yet, perhaps—no, there is nothing left for me !—Yes, you may go."

Urfort, unwilling, or unknowing how, to make any reply to observations that came so evidently from the heart, withdrew ; while the unhappy girl sat and strained her eyes after him ; each step, as he descended to the street, was counted ;—and when the outer door closed after him, she murmured to herself, "So perishes all hope !"

The Latin poet was too limited in his philosophy when he told the world that "anger is a short madness." Every passion in its excess arrives at the same result. Every passion, when its power

is so great as to drive before it the more calm and reasonable determinations of the mind by "the whiff and wind" of its exuberance, is a madness, as far as the unseating of the human judgment is such. When reason and discrimination prevail, the soul has its genuine tone;—when passion, with its ravishing strides, has seized upon the brain, the tenour of the soul is unnerved, and subject to the mercy of each succeeding gust.

The range and strength of the impulses under which Madeline's soul had been driven for the last week, began to be too much for her. She had as yet fought a gallant battle:—she had met ambuscade with ambuscade, manœuvre with manœuvre, attack with attack. But it was against fearful odds that she had been contending. De Mara had been against her—Urfort had been against her,—and, what was worse than ten thousand De Maras, or ten thousand Urforts, herself had been against her.

In spite, therefore, of all her efforts, the clouds of discomfiture were fast gathering around her. Little by little she had been weighed down by the variety and force of the attacks she had undergone;

and in proportion as she had gone beyond her strength to resist them, in the same proportion, now that she began to give way, did she yield to the current that had set against her, and feel the impulse of the pressing stream.

The mixture of Albert's preternatural knowledge, to which she had attached such price, had probably assisted in producing this result. It was a sort of treacherous ally that had at first insinuated itself into the stronghold of her brain, and then suddenly giving way when its aid was most needed and relied upon. In one of her most desperate struggles to counteract the intrigues of De Mara, she had leaned upon this prop for support: it had sunk beneath her weight, and the turn against her had in consequence become still more powerful and headlong.

When Urfort quitted her, hope went with him. Never before had it so entirely left her. When De Mara had roused all her indignation by his conduct at the ball, hope, though it seemed dead for a while, still lingered in the midst of the despair she had felt; and since that time the darling visitant of every human heart had rather gained

strength in her bosom, than lost it. But her despair now seemed irremediable: the departure of De Mara was a circumstance which her imagination had never contemplated:—the placing of hundreds of miles between them was a feature which all her consideration of the case had never suggested. Let that once happen, and death could not too soon befriend her, for even all her ardour of temperament was not able to feed her with an expectation that, once departed, he would ever again find his way to her feet.

But if this were hopeless, it appeared equally hopeless that any art of hers could stay his journey. What if she went to him?—What if she wrote again?—What if she intreated?—No! hopeless, hopeless, each and all. His journey was resolved, and her evil genius, in the shape of Altoz, stood by his side to prompt him to its instantaneous and irretrievable adoption.

Thus she looked around her, and found that all was darkness and despair. She still would have contended against fate itself, but she felt that the hand of events was upon her, and prevented the action of her thoughts. It was the worst disease

of the mind under which she laboured—a consciousness of what was wanted, joined to the incapacity of devising any medium through which that want should be supplied. She was like the hapless traveller in the desert—alas, too well awake to the burning and unquenchable thirst that had taken possession of him, but looking in vain for the means of allaying it.

Are we to wonder then that with disappointment for her portion, and the threatened departure of De Mara hovering over her as the finishing stroke to this scene of sorrow, that a species of madness seemed to assert its empire over her. The weak point of her character, as we have hitherto seen, was the impetuosity with which she embraced the first offer that her fancy suggested, whereby to conquer any difficulty under which her mind was labouring. This arose from the ardency of her temper being too great to allow her to weigh those consequences, which to a calculating head would appear likely to follow; and not from the want of power to make that calculation, had she chosen to apply herself to the task. But now that events had become too painful for her endurance, what

was formerly a weakness, grew into a confirmed disease. The good and the bad, the right and the wrong, became so mixed and indistinct in her brain, that it was unable to hold the balance between them, and she was ready to receive the very first proposal that a disturbed and heat-oppressed imagination might offer for her adoption. The machinations of those who had resolved her ruin had surrounded her ; and in first token of their success, her airy and romantic mind, which, had it been fostered, would have shone lovely and various as the rainbow of spring, had melted into a cloudy and overcast gloom, which threatened the universal deluge and destruction of her faculties.

But, though ready to embrace any opportunity that might present itself, her overborne mind, stretched beyond the tone of nature's function, was unable to suggest a movement. She sat, where Urfort had left her, unable to conjure a thought of her own, and waiting for some external impulse or circumstance to awaken her from the helplessness that had superseded the vigorous action of her mind, which had hitherto prevailed over every

difficulty, as long as there was aught of hope remaining at the bottom of her Pandora box of misery.

While thus stationary and irresolute, she heard a foot-step upon the stairs. Whose might it be? She hardly knew for whom to wish;—and to dread the presence of any was past, for her wretchedness had reached its climax, and she defied all that man could do to add to what was already full to overflowing.

It was Wahrend whose step she heard. When he entered the room, her head mechanically bowed in acknowledgment of his presence, and her lips moved in silent show of greeting; but it would perhaps be too much to say, that she did any thing to evince her consciousness of the individual person who stood before her. At all events the occurrences of the past hour had completely driven from her memory all those honest resolutions which had graced her repentance towards the Swiss, and her gaze upon him was not sufficient to call to her mind the duty that his maltreatment demanded at her hands.

"Mademoiselle Schvolen," said the visitor, as

he took his station near her,—"I am come to say farewell for the last time. Be not angry that I have this duty to perform; for this time, at least, it is you, not I, that have entailed this task upon me."

The sorrowing girl looked at him, as if listening to his words, and again she bowed her head:—but doubtful it is whether a syllable of his speech made an impression on her mind, save only the word "farewell," that jarred on the much-fretted chord of her heart, and gave her that involuntary shudder which her companion could not but notice, though he hardly knew how to account for it.

"Believe me," continued he, when he saw that she was not preparing to speak, "I come with no reproaches on my lips.—Nay, I even think I have almost dismissed them from my heart, though for a while they may haunt the place, like the shadow of something that has ceased to be. I am more willing to believe my judgment, than your sincerity, has gone astray. But be it as it may, 'farewell' is the only word I would utter, and 'farewell' is the only word that I would have in reply."

"Farewell!" murmured the Orphan;—"oh, yes; you shall have that word a thousand—and a million times, for you ask the only sound that my lips are able to utter."

"Farewell! farewell!" cried the Swiss; "and may you be more happy with the Count de Mara, than you seem to think I could make you!"

"Happy with De Mara!" shrieked Madeline; "who are you?—and who gave you license to plant daggers in my heart? Wahrend, I think you are; but Albert must have been at work, and given you some other soul; for the Wahrend that I knew was kind and gentle, with a mind as incapable of cruelty as De Mara's is of humanity."

The Swiss turned away his head at these words, and sighed deeply. "What does this mean?" at length he said:—"what is this maze into which I am plunged, and which one moment seems to promise the dearest of happiness, the next the most carking of misery?"

"Let them mean the last," exclaimed Madeline; "and I will be your faithful companion."

"You my companion," returned the other: "if that could but be, they should mean any thing or

nothing. You my companion! and yet do not use that word, for it was the happy term that dwelt upon our lips at Unwalden, before I had tasted sorrow, or you had been tempted to——"

"To betray, you would have said. Spare not the word. Spare not the belief. I have some flitting recollection passing through my mind that I had something to say to you about betrayal.—But it is gone for the present. Another time I will tell it you; and if you are indeed Wahrend, with his honest heart you shall thank me for my words; at least I thought so this morning."

"Madeline, what say you of another time? —Oh, do not again mislead my hopes! Deep was the resolution that I had formed:—great was the controul I put upon my feelings, before I could determine to come and say 'farewell.'—Let us be honest, though too plain words should be spoken in its cause.—Is it De Mara or myself who claims your heart?"

"De Mara a claim upon my heart!" exclaimed Madeline vehemently;—"yes, such a claim as the tiger has upon the deer, or the eagle of the sun upon the lamb. Wahrend, when we meet again, never let that name pass your lips!"

"Is it possible," cried the Swiss, with astonishment mixed with delight in his voice;—"is it possible that my fears have deceived me, and that the Frenchman is no nearer than myself to your heart?"

"Nor so near," replied Madeline; "for I am not yet so lost to sense and feeling as not to know the claim of honesty over villany."

"Villany?"

"Of the deepest die,—if insult, treachery, and falsehood can make the mixture."

"Are these words in earnest?" exclaimed Wahrend, with strong emotion in his voice.

"Look at me; and let that tell you whether I am in any humour to speak at Folly's bidding. Do you see the laugh in my eye, or joy on my cheek? If you do, they belie the agony of my heart, that should be written in every line of my countenance in characters as deep as the grave."

"And De Mara has caused all this?" demanded the Swiss.

Again Madeline bowed her head: the action, which before was tame and mechanical, now came strong upon her questioner's imagination, as

though a thousand voices had acclaimed in confirmation of his asking.

"Heaven give me power," cried he, "to think of these things with calmness! But think of them I must.—Oh, Madeline, I knew you in your happiness — woe is me! I know you in your misery.—In that happiness I was a sharer; and now I claim a right to partake in your sorrow. I claim it on your own words. You called on me to be your companion in wretchedness, and I answer to the cry."

"No, no, Wahrend—this must not be. I have injured you already too much. Your name and my uncle's will ever be a reproach to my heart. I will be companion to myself, for no one can better or revenge my cause."

"I can revenge it," cried Wahrend, with fervour; "and I will revenge it. I feel the difficulty of my position; but give me leave to speak to this man, and I will hazard the inference."

"It is in vain, good Wahrend," returned the Orphan, mournfully; "for De Mara quits Geneva this day. Perhaps ere now he is beyond its walls."

"His journey must be prevented," cried the Swiss.

"What say you? What say you?" exclaimed the Orphan with vehemence: "oh! repeat that again! Tell me that you will see De Mara, and not let him depart till this explanation is given; and I will thank you with my latest breath,—I will thank you on my bended knees."

"I promise it, Madeline:—from the bottom of my soul I promise it."

The look of the bewildered girl brightened as the Swiss pledged his faith to stop the Count's departure. The solemn manner in which she had bound herself to dismiss Wahrend, with a candid confession of the deceit she had practised on him, died away from her mind; and again a faint glimpse of hope stole into her heart, as she heard him pledge himself to do that which should prevent for a while the journey of the nobleman. Wahrend, as he gazed upon her, observed the change in her aspect and he again reiterated his promise.

"But it must be done quickly," cried she; "I know, from too certain information, that this day

he quits the city for ever, so that not a moment is to be lost."

"The sooner the thing is undertaken, the better will it correspond with the present temper of my mind," returned Wahrend:—"I thought that I had come hither to say farewell for ever; but your words have instilled fresh joy into my heart; and it is now with "gladsome voice I say farewell, for I look only to the hour when we are to meet again."

"But you will see De Mara now?"

"In one hour from this time I pledge myself to be with him; and in two expect to see me return, the comforter of your sorrow.—God bless you, dearest Madeline!" added he, in conclusion, and his voice somewhat wavered as he spoke—"in two hours, Heaven permitting, we meet again."

With these words he departed, and Madeline was left alone. For a moment she asked herself the question—what might so grave a leave-taking portend? but the thought speedily merged in the one absorbing recollection that his errand was to De Mara, and that his pledge was to prevent his

journey for that day,—perhaps for the next, and the next.—Here, then, again was time to work in. Albert must be found—Urfort must be sent for—the train must be laid—the arcanum must be put in operation, and her sole concern of heart must be confirmed or disbanded irretrievably and for ever.

It might be that for a moment she entertained a thought as to the manner in which Wahrend would proceed to stay the nobleman's departure; but it was on this point that the diseased state of her imagination chiefly betrayed itself. So far she felt her weakness as to know that she had in vain taxed her brain to discover a device by which that object might be accomplished, and that Wahrend had pledged himself to do that which was beyond the scope of her power of apprehension. But there she stopped. The chain of reason in her mind was too much broken to allow her to pursue the subject, for the purpose of seeing by what method the Swiss would make good his bond; and when she touched upon the point, her whole faculty became bewildered and astray. The source of her perception had been disturbed, and

it no longer flowed in a clear and unbroken stream. It was as though one of her senses had fallen away, or been blasted by the fire of her own brain, as the solitary oak that grows upon the marish heath has one side of its magnificent overspread struck by the lightning that accompanies the storm: to the casual observer it seems a tree entire; but when walked round and examined, the injury becomes evident and declared. Thus it was that Wahrend had not appreciated the change that had taken place in the Orphan. His path was honest and straightforward, and he little weened that it was necessary for him to wind round and round her to interpret the real meaning of the scene that had just passed between them. Madeline had but one object in her heart—to stay the journey of De Mara; but all-important as that object was to her, she had been forced to acknowledge to herself that her invention was at an end, and that it was in vain that she taxed her ability to meet the difficulty. In this situation she had been encountered by Wahrend. He had promised to do that for her which she was unable to do for herself. It was for this that she had

thanked him ;—it was for this that joy had again illumined her countenance.—All this was too subtle for Wahrend's comprehension :—a more agreeable solution of what had taken place lay nearer the surface, and, having found that, he did not trouble himself to look further for what might be more true — but, at the same time, more unpalatable.

It has already been said that a gleam of hope once more showed itself to Madeline. But it did not find her as of old. Her brain had received a shock which quiet and tranquillity could alone restore : the new expectation, therefore, that had been lighted in her bosom rather did her harm than good, for it again launched her into the stormy sea where she had so long been tossed about at the mercy of her persecutors :—instead of peace, it brought anxiety ; instead of tranquillity, a continual turbulence and harassment to the imagination.

Yes, once more did she resign herself to the ardours, the heart-movings, the excitations, and the disturbances to which the name of De Mara had for so long a period been the key. Once

more she resolved to seek Albert, and entreat him by every argument she could enforce upon his feelings and affections to submit his discovery to the test which she had proposed. Once more she determined to send for Urfort, and bid him prepare for those arrangements, which Albert's consent would be the signal for putting in requisition. These, however, were but the minor points which were to marshal her the way to the grand desideratum on which her whole stake depended; and therefore, whatever gloomy anticipations she might have as to the result of the latter, of the success of the former her excited imagination would not allow her to doubt. Urfort must prepare the plan that she should dictate to him, and Albert must yield to the irresistible fervour of her pleadings, when he was made aware that he held the balance of his sister's contentment in the one hand, and of her perdition in the other.

But where was she to find her brother? Each moment pressed; and she could better afford to lose half her existence at another time than half an hour at this. She had not seen Albert since the period when she parted from him with anger

in her eye, and indignation on her brow, at his pertinaceous refusal of her proposal. She therefore knew little of his movements since that time, but she was sufficiently acquainted with his general habits to fear that she must not expect to see him till the night was far advanced.

She would, however, go to his room, for, though he might not be there, it was possible that she might find some memorandum or token by which to judge of the probability of his return.

She went; and, to her surprise and delight, found him whom she sought. His being there was not that her recollection of his habits was incorrect, but on his way from home he had been met by Wahrend, who had made him acquainted with the determination he had formed of visiting his sister for the last time that morning to bid her farewell for ever, and who entreated him by his old friendship for him to accompany him back thither.

"I will go with you," said Albert, "and should it be necessary, make my appearance: but I cannot see any thing to call for that, and I would therefore rather wait in my own room till you know whether you need my presence."

Wahrend had consented to this arrangement, but the unexpected turn his interview with Madeline had taken had caused him entirely to forget that Albert was waiting for him; and he had therefore taken his departure to seek De Mara without exchanging a word with the youth.

When Albert heard the door of his chamber open, he looked up with the expectation of seeing Wahrend enter. When he perceived that that expectation was disappointed, and that it was his sister who was present, he started, for he remembered the manner in which he had last parted from her, and he knew not in what tone of mind she again appeared before him. But though this thought flitted across his memory, his anxiety still was to know what had come of the Swiss; so that as she approached the place where he was sitting, he almost involuntarily exclaimed, "Have you not seen Wahrend?"

"Yes, my brother; and he has taught me to bless his name, for he has shown himself the friend of my affliction. He has undertaken the commencement of that labour which it is for you to consummate."

"What mean you, Madeline? I thought that he had come hither to say farewell for ever, and to quit Geneva for a happier spot."

"Let no one quit Geneva!" cried the girl. "Oh that some besieging army were at hand to prevent a single living creature departing from its precincts!"

"Tell me, Madeline,—was not 'farewell' the word that came from the lips of Wahrend?"

"It was!" returned she, with a sickly smile; "but we all think that 'farewell' is to be said, before there is any necessity for it. It is a grievous heart-heavy word, and should not be spoken lightly."

"To what is this strange discourse to lead?" demanded Albert.

"It must lead to the alteration of your unkind resolve, that has haunted me with evil omen each moment since we parted. But forget what you then said, and glad my heart with the signal of consent."

"Sister, it cannot be! I thought our last interview was of too painful a nature ever to have

been renewed.—Why do you thus revive the subject each moment that we come together?—Do you think I love to refuse you that which you demand?—Do you think that I have ventured to do it from any light or fickle resolution?—Believe me, had not my whole soul revolted at the thought, I would never have subjected myself to such a scene as that which has so lately passed between us.—Madeline, dear Madeline, pause in good time, and never again speak on this topic."

"Albert, I must speak on it. I must make this demand at your hands; and rather let me conjure you to pause before you break my heart, and confirm this wild beating of my brain, that threatens I know not what. De Mara is on the eve of departure:—this very day he would have gone, but that fortunately is averted. The delay, however, is but of short interval:—to-morrow, perhaps, he leaves the city, never to return.—Albert, I pray you by all that sister can pray by, to be speedy in your consent."

"Why not let De Mara depart?"

"No, no," interrupted Madeline; "I must

read his heart, or die.—For ever,—yes, for ever, have we separated; but at least let me have the satisfaction of knowing what he really thought of one who has thrown away her affection for him, and who now only thinks of his name with a shudder, as the old man looks back at some mad hair-breadth peril of his youth."

"Madeline, is this true? Have you indeed banished De Mara from your heart? And shall Wahrend—"

"Wahrend shall help me in my task," she cried; "he has this day shown himself the same noble, disinterested, kindly creature, that we ever knew him to be."

"Those are indeed his attributes. But how is he to help you?"

"De Mara threatens departure," replied the agitated girl; "but good Wahrend has promised to take care of that."

"Wahrend!" exclaimed the brother; "in what dangerous scheme is it that you have entangled him?—Is it not enough that you and I must be consigned to a life of misery, but must

our gentle friend be also joined in our wretchedness ?"

"What misery ? What wretchedness ? Not for worlds would I have brought either the one or the other on poor Wahrend. Alas, too much already has he suffered through my foolish plotting !—Heaven send me power to reward his patience ! But this was of his own proposing. He found my heart bleeding with the wounds that De Mara had inflicted on it. He drew from me the history of my woe; and it was he who offered to speak to this misdoer."

"If this be so," exclaimed Albert, "then have you signed the death-warrant of one or other. Wahrend and the Frenchman will never separate while both survive."

"Brother, brother !" shrieked Madeline ; "your senses are astray. Wahrend promised only to speak to De Mara."

"Ay, ay, 'speak' was the word to you ; but fearful will be the organ through which he will address the Count."

"He promised only to speak," murmured Madeline.

"Think you the brave man talks of such things as these to a woman? He might promise only to speak, but he meant far other in his heart. O God, O God, where is the curse that was entailed upon us by this haughty intriguer to have its end?"

"I will not believe it," exclaimed the alarmed girl, while a thrilling tremor took possession of her frame. "Wahrend is so gentle, that he has ever seemed as if he could not injure the meanest thing that crawled. Whence, then, is he to muster the sanguinary purpose that you would put upon him?"

"You have described the brave man's character. His heart, when at peace, is tender as the mother's towards her babe; but rouse it, and the lion is more safe to meet,—to face the tiger in his lair the more prudent choice."

Madeline would have replied, but at that moment the servant entered the room, and presented her with a letter. It was from Wahrend, and its contents ran thus:—

"Dearest Madeline,

"By the time you receive this I shall have redeemed my pledge. It is a fearful one, but I repent me not that I have given it. I would not write, but that I feel that the fortune of the day may be against me, and that if I write not now, never again may my soul interchange thought with yours. But even as I pen these lines, I persuade myself that it is more for your sake than my own; for if this day sees the end of my life, it may be matter of comfort to you to know that I shall die invoking blessings on your head, and thanking you from the bottom of my heart for the permission you have given me to make your cause my own.

"Yours in all faith and love,

WAHREND."

Madeline's eye ran over these words with the rapidity of one who felt that her whole destiny was involved in them. In a moment she interpreted the meaning. She shrieked,—let fall the

paper,—and would herself have fallen too, but that her brother caught her in his arms.

"Albert," cried she, with horror in her look, "it is too true:—all that you have said is to come to pass,—perhaps has come to pass ere this. Fly, my brother, fly! Seek them out. Search the Count's lodgings;—search Wahrend's;—search Geneva."

"But how am I to leave you in this state, my sister?" demanded the alarmed youth.

"In what state?" cried she, springing from his arms, and tottering forward:—"do you not see that I am calm and strong? Fly, I say, fly! Oh, gracious Heaven, be merciful on one that has suffered her share, and let not blood be the consummation of the horrors that have been gathering around her!"—And then perceiving that Albert still lingered, as if irresolute to leave her in such a state,—"Why go you not?" she exclaimed: "why seek you not these murderers, who would kill themselves and me at one fell stroke. Tell Wahrend as he loves me,—as he values my good wishes, or my favour, to desist

from his horrible purpose.—Tell De Mara—No; woe is me, I have no power there! — But if you find them at the deadly struggle, stand between them, my brother, and prevent the fatal conflict."

With these words she sank upon a chair in a state of utter exhaustion; while Albert, hardly knowing which way to decide, yet fearful to delay his departure any longer, reluctantly quitted the house to seek those between whom he knew the contention would be hot and fierce.

CHAPTER IV.

Semp. My sword shall answer thee! Have at thy heart!—
Juba. Nay, then, beware thine own, proud, barbarous man!
ADDISON'S CATO.

Dost thou imagine thou canst slide in blood,
And not be tainted with a shameful fall?
OLD PLAY.

WAHREND had well expressed the feelings of his mind in the short letter which he had addressed to Madeline. Her manner during their interview had been strange and unusual; but still he imagined that he might fairly interpret her words into a returning affection towards him, and the unhesitating way in which she had accepted the offer of his services with respect to De Mara had greatly assisted in bringing him to that conclusion. How far she had previously been involved with that

nobleman, the Swiss did not care to ask himself. There are some questions from which the mind shrinks unless absolutely forced upon its attention by another. Thus it was with Wahrend ; and as there was none other to insist on the consideration of the subject, he was happy to avoid it, as one little calculated to afford him satisfaction. But whatever might have been the favour she had formerly shown to De Mara, the Swiss had at least this reflection for his consolation,—those days were gone by,—the Frenchman's reign was at an end,—and her heart, as far as his simplicity would allow him to judge, had returned to that train of thought which had been so gracious and delightful when together they had wandered through the soft glades and copses that surrounded Unwalden.

Yes, the reign of De Mara was at an end ; and Wahrend was not sorry, though the risk that it entailed on himself was great, that Madeline had sanctioned his visit to the nobleman, as it must necessarily be the means of undermining his power, and claim upon her feelings more irremediably than ever. He was to present himself to De Mara

as the representative of Madeline. He was to demand the meaning of his conduct towards her. He was to prosecute that demand perhaps even to the shedding of blood. But however painful all this might be in one point of view, it afforded satisfaction on another, for it must infallibly be the means of showing the Count that his empire was at an end, while it gave himself a claim upon Madeline such as he had never before possessed.

But, independently of the claim which he himself would derive from this proceeding, there was another feeling in his mind which received satisfaction from the destined separation between Madeline and De Mara, and of which he was to be the organ. It was true that the Count had been his rival; but Wahrend had sufficient honesty of heart to do justice to the Frenchman's merits, notwithstanding the invidious position in which he had found him on his arrival at Geneva. What he had himself seen of him at the Plain Palais, and had since gathered about him in casual remarks from Madeline and her brother, had made him aware of the talent and address of the nobleman. At once he had confessed his superiority as

a man of the world to himself. At once he had perceived that in the battle-field of love he was likely to be overborne by so skilful and prepared an antagonist. Nay, so entirely had he done justice to the Count's power in this respect, that had even Madeline herself applied to him on the subject, he would have admitted to her the advantages which his rival had at his command. But though his manliness and candour were too great to permit him to decry any portion of the address and insinuating qualities of the Frenchman, this very admission served, on the other hand, to make his fear of him the greater—his aversion to him the more rooted and determined. Hence, from his first knowledge of the Count's pretensions to the affections of Madeline, he had entertained towards him a jealous and undisguised sentiment of dislike ; and hence, when Madeline so warmly worded her description of her quarrel with the nobleman, Wahrend had gladly embraced the opportunity that it afforded him of putting himself forward as her champion, and the avenger of her wrongs.

It was with these reflections that his mind was filled, as he hastily proceeded towards his lodg-

ings, to avail himself of the hour which, according to the terms of his agreement with his mistress, was yet his own. Wahrend was a brave man,—a man brave in the best sort of bravery,—courageous, without rashness—determined, without audacity. Such a man as this may be impelled to the feeling that he is called on to face another, sword to sword, and life for life. Such a man may forget common sense, and the wisdom that nature herself has condescended to plant in his bosom; but, at all events, he does not undertake the affair with the hot-headed absurdity of one of those weak heads who are but one degree removed from a ward in Bedlam, or with the vain-glorious mouthing of a fire-eater, who hopes to gain the applause of the lowest rabble, at the expense of his character with the wiser, the better, and the more judicious portion of mankind. It might be that Wahrend had some misgivings as to the course in which he was engaged; but, even if so, he was too far involved to retract. His word had been passed on the subject, to her for whose smiles he lived, and whose frowns he feared more than death; and, at the same time, the step that he

was about to take seemed calculated to furnish him with a means, justified by the practice of the world, of getting rid of the rivalry of De Mara for ever. These were the considerations that determined him to pursue the course which his interview that morning with Madeline had commenced, and he therefore steadily prepared himself for the undertaking. For a while he forced himself to forget her whose sake had brought him to this, that he might turn his attention to such things as were not so immediately connected with her. But the interval was but short. When he thought of the disposition of his property, it was she who seemed to him to claim its possession ; for he was that day, perhaps, going to present her with his life ; and what could he better do with that which his parents had bestowed on him with that life, than unite it to his more precious gift ? not in the hope of enhancing it, but in proof of how entirely and altogether her image had commanded him in his doings that day. When he thought of the times that might be if things went well, it was still Madeline that came upon his mind, as the one essential ingredient that was necessary to the

filling of his cup of bliss, and without whom riches, wealth, and honours were no better than a miserable drop, fit only to be discarded. Thus, then, the image of his mistress was speedily returned to his recollection, whichever way he directed his thoughts ; and the perpetual consideration of how he might best add to her happiness and enjoyment was the genuine test of the reality of his love, when compared to the selfish and wily affectation of the passion, as evinced by him whom he was about to seek.

It was in furtherance of this consideration, that the idea first entered his mind of the propriety of his writing to Madeline, ere he quitted his lodgings for his encounter with the nobleman. He felt the peril in which he was about to be involved, and his own heart was able to instruct him how he should feel, were another placed in his situation, and he in that of Madeline. Those same feelings, he imagined, would be extant in the bosom of his mistress ; and as the affection of his heart had induced him to bestow on her those means of worldly comforts which were within his gift, still more did the same sentiment call upon

him to provide her, to the full extent of his power, with that peace of mind without which mountains of wealth would be unenjoyable. Their interview of the morning had, on her side, been marked throughout by a rapidity and perturbation of manner, which, though it had not let him into the whole depth of her state of mind, had at least made him aware that she was labouring under considerable excitement of feeling. It was not to be expected that that excitement would endure ; and he therefore felt bound to provide, to the utmost of his scope, against any of her own self-reproaches that might arise, should the events of the day be of a nature to awaken any such within her bosom.

The writing and despatching of those few lines, which we have already had the opportunity of reading, were the last act to detain him from going in search of his rival ; and, having seen his messenger depart with the missive, he himself proceeded towards the hotel of the Count.

On his arrival at De Mara's abode, the first person with whom he met was the punctilious Monsieur Jacotot, who, as he had not received

any orders to deny his master, had admitted his being at home, and was preparing to make himself acquainted with the visitor's name, for the purpose of carrying it to the Count, when Urfort descended into the hall where they were standing. One glance was sufficient to remind him who Wahrend was; and knowing how the Count's business stood with the orphan, he could not help surmising that this unexpected visit portended some change in the aspect of affairs, for which neither he nor De Mara was prepared. The quiet demeanour of the Swiss was not very much calculated to induce the idea that he had come on any openly hostile errand; but, at all events, his having found his way to the Count's hotel must have some intention for its prompter; and, even if it were only for the purpose of seeing what preparations for travel were going on, it would be necessary to meet his approach with due caution.

With these reflections hurrying through his mind, Urfort immediately obtruded himself into the company of Wahrend and Jacotot, and interrupted the question of the latter, who was about to demand the name of the stranger, by ob-

serving, "Monsieur Jacotot, you are wanted up-stairs immediately."

The old French lacquey, who had been watching the progress of Urfort with the Count for the last few days with a jealous eye, replied somewhat surlily:—"I do not know what you mean by being wanted up-stairs. There is but one person in this house who has a right to command me. If you mean that the Count De Mara wants me, please to be more explicit."

Urfort, who by his mode of addressing the veteran, had hoped to avoid the announcement that De Mara was in the house, bit his lips at the observation; but, perceiving that the mischief was done, and determined to get rid of the lacquey, he replied, "I do mean what you have so elegantly expressed. The Count De Mara requires your presence in his own room."

Jacotot made a stiff bow of recognition, as expressive of his willingness to obey the summons of his master, and then marched up-stairs with a profound gravity, that was intended to chill this new intruder upon the Count's livery into something like awe and respect.

Urfort, when he perceived that the old man was fairly out of hearing, moved nearer to the Swiss, and said, "I believe you were asking for my master. I am sorry to say that he is most particularly engaged at present."

"Be so good as to tell him," replied the other, "that M. Wahrend desires to have an opportunity of speaking with him. I think, when he hears my name, that he will waive present business for the purpose of seeing me."

"I am sure I beg your pardon," said Urfort; "but the Count is just on the point of setting out for a long journey, and his orders to me were so peremptory, that I hardly know how to venture to carry even your name to him. Is it not possible that a letter would serve your purpose?"

"I beg," said Wahrend, somewhat angrily, "that you will act as I have directed you. I will be answerable to your master for any blame he may attach to you."

Urfort would still have attempted to prevent the interview between Wahrend and the Count; but at that moment De Mara himself descended into the hall where he was holding the Swiss in

parley. Wahrend met him as he reached the foot of the stairs with the observation—"I am sorry, my Lord, to learn from your servant that your business is so pressing, more especially as that upon which I come will require your immediate attention."

The Count, who had descended for the purpose of inquiring the reason why Urfort had sent Jacotot to him unbidden, was now easily able to solve that which had previously been a riddle to him, and he replied to the speech of the Swiss—

"You, of course, must be aware of the due importance of what you have to say, Sir; but I trust that I may be allowed to form an opinion of my own on the subject, without taking yours for granted."

"Most assuredly; and if your Lordship will lead the way to a private apartment, that opportunity shall be afforded you instantly."

De Mara (like Urfort before him) had a feeling that this visit of the Swiss might have well been dispensed with; but as he had made his appearance while Urfort was endeavouring to get rid of the intruder, he saw no way of avoiding the inter-

view which was proposed, and he therefore replied by introducing Wahrend to an apartment up-stairs, whither Urfort took care to follow them.

When the rivals had taken their seats, there was a pause.

"May I intreat," said the Count, "that we proceed to business? I have several engagements this morning."

Wahrend stiffly replied, "I only wait till your Lordship shall have dismissed your servant to state the nature of my errand."

De Mara looked somewhat confused at having such an oversight pointed out to him by the Swiss: but the fact was that Urfort, though he wore his livery, was so little identified in his mind as a servant, that he had not thought of the light in which he would appear to the Swiss. A slight colour, therefore, suffused his cheek, as he turned to Urfort, and said, "You may wait below till I want you, but be sure not to be out of the way."

Urfort, as he withdrew, muttered to himself, "Our Switzer, methinks, is mighty particular this morning as to his company. However, I know no law against listening at a key-hole, so

I shall be bold to act this once on my own responsibility."

Both Wahrend and the Count watched the loiterer as he unwillingly withdrew from the room; and as soon as the door was closed, the latter hastened to say, lest the Swiss should again allude to the irregularity of his allowing his servant to be present at their conference—"Now, Sir, we are alone; and may I request to hear your explanation in brief."

"My Lord," returned the other, with great seriousness, "I beg in the first place to assure you that the office I have undertaken is not of a nature to give pleasure to my mind: but the duty that is imposed upon me I feel to be so imperative, that though the hope of its leading to any thing satisfactory is beyond my expectations, I am not the less impressed with the necessity of carrying it into execution."

"Perhaps, Sir," interrupted the Count, "it would be more advisable to inform me what this wonderful duty is, before you take the trouble to descant so eloquently on its mere abstract qualifications. At present it is mere words and darkness with me."

Wahrend bit his lip at the abruptness of the nobleman's manner, but still continued his observations in the same undisturbed accent, as if determined that nothing should anticipate the discharge of his task in the way which he had prescribed to himself. "Allow me to inform you in the first place," said he, "that I have this morning been with Mademoiselle Schvolen."

"Sir, it requires great allowance for you to tell me that, for I can assure you I derive no satisfaction from hearing it."

"You will probably derive still less," continued the Swiss, "when I also inform you that I have heard from that lady's own lips the painful manner in which you have played with her feelings, and taken advantage of the privilege of acquaintanceship with which she honoured you."

"Sir, sir!" cried De Mara—"but you have said enough on this subject. Will you now be pleased to explain the magnificent motive which may have induced you to present yourself at my hotel?"

"My first motive is that you should hear what I have to say on this business; my second, that we might mutually discuss the way in which repa-

ration may best be made to the lacerated feelings of the lady."

"Indeed! a mutual discussion with so eminent a defender of the sex will be highly edifying. It was a pity you insisted on my servant quitting the room, for all the world should be admitted to so instructive a discourse."

"Your Lordship is welcome to take my remarks as you please. But of this, at all events, I am sure—that I must be heard out. When that is done will be the time for me to pass a comment on the pleasantries with which you seem disposed to intersperse this interview."

"Sir, rely upon it," said the Count, hotly, "you shall be heard out :—it would be a pity to check such amusing effusions. I beg that you will proceed."

"The few observations I had to make are nearly concluded," said the other: "I have heard from Mademoiselle Schvolen's own lips that you have insulted her ; and my errand here, therefore, is to know what reparation you purpose offering to her wounded feelings. I do not wish to push things to extremities, but it is impossible for me to have

listened to the words that fell from her this morning, without feeling that I am called upon, by every manly and honourable sentiment, to require at your hands an apology for the unjustifiable manner in which you have wounded her mind, to an extent that I could not have believed, had I not witnessed it. It was because I witnessed this, that I held myself bound to have an interview with you on the subject; and the only reason why I did not forerun that intention with a letter, was because I was at the same time given to understand that you were on the point of quitting Geneva."

There was a pause when Wahrend ceased to speak, ere De Mara exclaimed, "I presume that you have finished what you had to say; and now permit me in my turn to ask by what right you have come hither to demand this apology, supposing (which I deny) that I have acted in the manner which you have been pleased so courteously to describe?"

"I come by right of the interest which I feel in the happiness of Mademoiselle Schvolen."

"And what if I am not willing to admit the right which you suppose that interest gives you?"

"I think I could show you that in my case it does give such a right. But to avoid dispute on this point, let me also inform you that I have come hither at the lady's own request."

"At Madeline's request!" cried the Count; "by Heaven! this is beyond endurance! Have not only my secrets been laid open, but am I to be put in leading-strings too?—Oh! this is well—mighty well! But one thing further, Sir, and I am satisfied—Did she authorise you to make use of the terms which you have employed?"

"With respect to the accusation against you I have but used her own words. But as to the demand I have made, of course I need not inform your Lordship, that it is not customary to enter into particulars with a lady when we feel that we are called on to redress the wrongs that she has received."

"You have said enough, Sir," exclaimed De Mara, vehemently; "you have said enough. And now let me tell you in return, that had Madeline herself come with you, I never would have acknowledged your right to demand an apology at my hands. What acquaintance you may have had

with her formerly, I know not. But this I know—that since your re-appearance here, you have stood in my path like a dreamy incubus or some shadowy apparition. But at least I will take care not to give substance to your right to cross my steps. Sir, you are an intruder between me and my pursuits; and I refuse to give you any explanation whatever with respect to Mademoiselle Schvolen."

"I was afraid that it would come to this," replied the Swiss, quietly, "and I have accordingly prepared myself for the alternative. Count, we do not wear swords, but we must show that we know how to use them."

"With all my heart! Your proposal pleases me, for all the apology I can ever make must be at my sword's point; and it may chance that you at the same time will receive a hint of the folly of passing between me and my passions. But we must to business instantly. The Chevalier Altoz—"

"I crave your pardon," interrupted Wahrend: "the pressing nature of the case, joined to the fear that I might find you already departed from Geneva, brought me here almost immediately on

my quitting Mademoiselle Schvolen; and I have, therefore, had no time to engage a friend to act on my behalf. Nor, indeed, do I know that I could obtain one in less than a day or two, for I have no acquaintances in Geneva, and should be obliged to ride over to my own neighbourhood for the purpose."

"The matter requires no explanation," cried De Mara, "for I like it better as it is. I have weapons at hand, and with your permission the business shall be brought to an issue at once. My servant, if you do not object, shall alone be present; and, in order to prevent any mistakes, whatever orders I give him shall be made in your presence; or, if you would rather, you shall yourself give him the necessary directions."

"There is no occasion for that," replied Wahrend; "I have no doubt that your Lordship will arrange every thing for the best."

Wahrend's consent having thus been given to this plan, the Count summoned Urfort to the apartment; and, as he had been true to his resolution of taking up his post at the key-hole, it was not very long before he answered the summons.

"Urfort," said the Count, when he entered the room, "this gentleman and I have some business to settle which will require your attendance. Take this key, and fetch the swords which you will find in the cupboard which it unlocks; but be sure that you breathe not a syllable of your errand to any one that you may meet; and throw my cloak over them, that it may not be seen by the servants what it is you are carrying."

Urfort gave a sort of half chuckle as he took the key, as if the errand had awakened comfortable fancies in his mind; and he strode away in all haste to obey the Count's directions.

The short pause that ensued ere he returned was passed in solemn silence. The action that was to come had been agreed upon, and they were only waiting till the instruments should be furnished to commence the deadly conflict. Words seemed to be at an end between them, and hereafter deeds were to speak their thoughts. Wahrend had expected that it would come to this, and he had steeled the humanity of his nature to suit the severity of the occasion. His disposition was "gentle, but not fearful;" and the effort on his

side had been, not to find the courage necessary to the encounter, but to banish from his heart those really honourable feelings that whispered their repugnance to the forceful mode about to be adopted. Had a rightful demand been made, he would have been as ready as Marcus Curtius to leap the gulf that yawned destruction, or as Leonidas to throw himself on the pointed spears of an innumerous foe. But it was with the very first blush of this pending event that he was dissatisfied. A son of nature, freedom, and the mountains, he had learned better things, and it required a giant effort of his virtuous mind to doff the glorious armour that truth had heretofore lent to it, and to establish in its place the gewgaw panoply that the world calls honour.—Not so with De Mara. Ever the world's creature in this, as well as in all other things, he was willing to subscribe to the world's articles of faith. He was a gentleman, a nobleman, and a knight; and any one of these was sufficient to require him to cut a throat according to the decorum prescribed. He had learned bravery by rote, as schoolboys learn Latin, and had found talent enough to be perfect

in the part. He could poise his weapon, and give the lunge in full with more skill than any with whom he had yet crossed foil or rapier. He was proud of the accomplishment. He knew that it gave him the mastery over ninety-nine out of every hundred of those to whom chance might oppose him, and he was a brave man accordingly. The thing came to him of course. He had had such affairs on his hands before; and though he had never yet been so absolutely fortunate as to kill his man, he had always come out of these encounters with amazing éclat. With these sentiments for his general groundwork, he also had his peculiar ones for the existing occasion. The words of Wahrend had penetrated deeper into his soul than would have been supposed by the manner in which he had received them when uttered. Madeline had made him her confidant. She had complained to him of the wrongs she had received. She had told him of the insult that had been offered to her. All this was bad enough; but how tenfold worse remained behind, and was laid open to his knowledge, when the Swiss affirmed that it was by Madeline he had been sent to demand this

explanation!—that it was she who had constituted him her champion!—and that it was under her instruction that he had dared to come to his very abode to beard him for his conduct towards her. These were the thoughts that rankled in De Mara's breast. These were the thoughts that stung him to fierce revenge; and a thousand times almost in one minute did he swear to himself that Wahrend's life should be the forfeit of the pang.

Thus, though they stood in silence awaiting the return of Urfort, the soul of either was not inactive. But of how dreadful a nature was the vein of reflection that coursed its depths! Their thoughts were thoughts of blood, though they tried to belie them by the steadiness of their looks; and they addressed their minds to the same slaughterous theme, which their nerved and rapid arms were in a short minute about to reduce to practice. The breath of the late kind-hearted Wahrend thickened as he lashed his imagination into fit service for the coming scene, while the wily Count gave away cunning for ferocity,— forgot his prided civilization,—and, in spirit, howled to his own soul like a savage. Had their minds

been pictured in their outward and observable forms, they might have been taken for two of the figures that blazed on Achilles' shield :—

" One held a living foe, that freshly bled
With new-made wounds ; another dragg'd a dead." *

Urfort's return was the signal for breaking the pause, and putting them again into action. He brought with him three well-tempered blades, which, when unsheathed, shone with smiling surface, as though in mockery of the bloody business on which they were so soon to be employed.

" I believe," said the Count, as he took the weapons that were proffered by his attendant, " that you will find them pretty exactly on a par. They are, however, at your service, to take which best fancies you."

Wahrend only bowed in reply as he laid his hand on the one which was nearest to him.

" And now, Urfort, remove those chairs and table into yon corner," continued the Count ; " and you are to observe that though it is necessary you should be present at what is about to take place,

* Pope's Homer's Iliad.

you are on no account to interfere in any way whatever, till called upon both by M. Wahrend and myself, unless one should be wounded and fall. You will take your station so as to see all that passes, but further than that you are to have no share in the proceeding."

"Perhaps it is but reasonable," remarked Wahrend, "to ask your servant whether he would rather decline having even that share in it. It would be pity to force mischief on the poor fellow against his will."

"I am much obliged to your honour," briskly replied Urfort, "but am well content with my office. It is long since I heard the clattering of swords, and it will do my heart good to see their quick motion flaring in the day-light."

The Count gave his attendant a look that was intended to silence him; but Urfort either did not or would not regard the token. "The only thing," continued he, "that I am afraid of is, lest the terrible clatter of the steel should reach any of the sharp ears in the hotel, and so the sport should be spoiled. I should be ready to die were any one to interrupt such noble pastime."

The Count looked angry at the observation, as he remarked in reply,—"The room is far removed from the frequented part of the house, and I think we run no such hazard."

"But what if it should happen?" persisted Urfort; "the folks here are so plaguy strict that it would be made a syndic affair of in a twinkling. Now, though the crossing of swords is very pretty pastime, for my own part I rather incline, after all, to the fashion I learned in England—pistols and hair-triggers, with the end of a handkerchief in each gentleman's hand. Pop!—pop!—It is over in a minute, and neither side can complain of delay in the business."

"You are something too forward, Sir, with your advice," said the Count; "but I trust M. Wahrend will make allowance for the riot-running of an English tongue."

While Wahrend was bowing in acknowledgment of the Count's observation, Urfort doggedly repeated, "I say 'pistols for ever!'"

"For myself," said De Mara, "I am well contented with swords: it is a weapon I have

always been happy in handling. But if M. Wahrend should prefer the suggestion of our umpire (as I suppose we must call him) I am ready to accede."

"Not at all," replied the Swiss; "one of the boasts of my family is that we are descended from William Tell; and it would be shame indeed, if I were not willing to handle a weapon, which, next to his bow, that honoured patriot esteemed as his most potent friend."

"Well," said Urfort, "if it must be swords, it must. And now, gentlemen, I believe you may proceed: the furniture is well out of the way."

"What want you with that footstool?" demanded the Count.

"That I retain for my own elevation," answered Urfort: "by standing on it I shall be able to keep a more watchful eye on the event, and know better when to discharge my humble office."

Again a silence, dead and profound, ensued. The combatants for a moment resigned their weapons, that they might strip to a freer action

of their muscles:—but this without a word:—

"They ended parle, and both addressed to fight." *

It was but the work of a minute: — that elapsed, the twain with limbs firm-set, and all their corporeal powers braced to the feat, met face to face. They poised their tempered weapons high in air: with rapid moving foot they tried their standing; with bright and judging eye they measured each the other's length and motion. This in silence.—Then their rapiers met. It was the first sound to break the stillness of the scene; and humanity might have wept at the thought, that those jarring swords were sounding the ruthless knell of a human life.

While thus the antagonists, Urfort with cunning gaze took cognisance of the points displayed on either side. He watched their preparatory doings with the coolness of an automaton, and the judgment of a fencing-master; and it was not till the clash of the first meeting of their swords reached his ear, that he warmed upon the subject.

The first onset was cool, and delivered on both sides with consummate judgment. It almost

* Paradise Lost.

appeared as if each was master of the intention of the other, before it was put in execution, and had prepared a countermove to resist the fatal purpose that winged each passage of the weapon. Had the stake for which these skilful handlers played been less deadly, it might have joyed the heart to note the expressive grace and design of each movement that ensued as the play grew hotter and more fierce. The Frenchman moved with lightness from position to position, and with each movement varied his general posture, till he should find that which would take his opponent unawares: he pressed forward, — then warily retreated, — awaiting the looked-for opening. Wahrend, meanwhile, with eyes as quick in speed as the arrow of his far-famed ancestor, changed as the other changed, and ever presented a cautious front to his opponent. His arm seemed firm and steady as an iron frame, while his wrist gave ever-varying motion to his sword. The Count had intended to play a deep and artful part, concealing the better portion of his skill, till he saw some irresistible opportunity, on which he might throw in a vigorous lunge, and at one thrust close the

event of the day. But Wahrend's admirable play soon told him that the thought was vain; and he found that he was too well matched to allow his keeping any of his method in reserve.

Thus, for a while, the battle went; and Urfort, who had nothing to do with humanity, was excited even to laughter as the eager blades flashed and re-flashed before his watchful eyes. His position, which had at first been stationary, seemed too quiescent to suit the humour of his feelings. Gradually he was worked into action, in response to their more rapid movements, till the narrow footstool, on which he had placed himself, became too small a surface to contain him. He descended from his station: anon, he was there again. He shifted attitudes as they below him shifted. He clenched his iron fist, as though he himself were clutching the sword of death, and about to thrust it at some imaginary foe. On and on this went, till at length his excited feelings burst forth in involuntary exclamations—"By Heaven, a noble thrust!" he cried, as De Mara trailed the weapon of the Swiss from its bearing, and in quick recovery lunged his

own for the heart.—" And as nobly parried too !" he added, when Wahrend, with recovery not less rapid than his foe's, beat off the home-thrust, which, had its reached its destination, would never have needed a fellow to finish the work begun.—" Glorious business, by St. Paul !" again exclaimed the umpire, as he watched the clashing weapons cross and recross in swift collision.—" It only wants some blood-letting to give prime honour to the matter."

But a change was now perceivable in the current of the fight, which gave Urfort other employment than that of passing comments on the action, and on which the crisis of the day depended. De Mara, who had put forth his best skill and power in assaulting his opponent, began to exhibit signs of the first freshness of his attack wearing away. Urfort perceived it; and the Swiss perceived it too. Hitherto the play of the latter had been comparatively on the defensive; but he now saw his advantage, and he determined that the opportunity should not be thrown away. With fire in his eye, and the fierce pressure of a giant's strength in his motions, he chased De

Mara from side to side, accompanying each move with desperate but well-regulated lunges. The Count played his part in answer well. He parried the sword's point each time it was presented to his bosom; but found in this too much employment to be able to retaliate with equal vigour. Wahrend observed his condition, and, in proportion as the difficulty increased, parted with his defence, and added to his attack. The cause and the effect went hand in hand. The more the Count was pressed, the more he found it obligatory upon him to attend only to the parrying of the thrusts, which Wahrend advanced with threefold fury. The vigour of the nobleman's arm by degrees became too relaxed to repel the severity of the efforts which his antagonist was making, and he was forced to endeavour to supply the deficiency by continually shifting his ground, and retreating before the assault. This, however, was but a temporary expedient, and Wahrend well knew how to turn it to his more certain advantage. The more De Mara retired, the more hotly he pressed upon him; and at length, observing his opportunity, with one right-governed lunge he

forced him into a corner of the room, where he had to fight against such odds, that another minute would have put him at the mercy of the Swiss.

The strongest tide of human affairs has sometimes been turned in less than that space of time. Urfort, who had watched with intense anxiety the scene that has just been described, saw in a moment the difficulty that would involve his patron if he were once entangled in the corner, whither it was evidently the Swiss's object to force him. He had hoped and hoped that De Mara, aware of his danger, had still some cunning shift in reserve, by which at the last moment he proposed to disengage himself from the peril that threatened; but hope was at an end when he saw his back fairly wedged into the angle of the room, with scarcely space enough for the half-play of his sword-arm. Hope is at an end from De Mara's own exertions, and unless some other can help him, Wahrend is in the act of making the last fatal lunge that must beat his opponent's weapon from its guard, and lodge its own point deep in his bosom. His foot is placed;—his arm is nerved;—the thrust is making. But as he presses to the rush, he

stumbles—reels. The Count dashes forward from his imminent position; and at the same moment drives his eager blade deep through the bosom of the Swiss—ay, to his very heart the weapon strains.

Wahrend, who, as the Count's last lunge reached him, was recovering his balance, is again shaken from his centre. For a moment he struggles—then falls with heavy burthen to the ground on the very spot where his foot first stumbled.—What is it that pillows his sinking head?—the umpire's foot-stool!—Urfort's stage from which he had elected to see the contest!

The eyes of the wounded Swiss, though death is making quick ravage of his vital spirit, glare upon Urfort and the Count, and seem to ask, "How came that stumbling-block in such a place?" They understand the appeal, and the Count's face sickens in its hue as the disgraceful conjecture flits across his mind, while Urfort chuckles to a demoniac tune in answer to the heart-heaved groan of Wahrend.

It is at this moment that the door opens, and Albert rushes in. A glance is enough—he sees where

De Mara stands in fearful admiration of the deed his hand has committed—he sees where Wahrend, the friend of his youth and happiest hours, lies bleeding away his life.

"Wahrend! my Wahrend!" cries the Orphan, as he hurries to his side, "open your eyes, and know your faithful Albert."

The eyes of the Swiss were obedient to the summons. They opened, and their gaze was fixed on him who had spoken. For a moment they knew him not, for the thick film hung on their surface, and robbed them of their clarity; but, a moment after, and the dying man recognised the kindly stooping form that tended him to the death.

"Is it you, then, my Albert?" murmured he; "Heaven be my witness that this half-dead heart thanks you for this last and best of kindnesses."

"Oh, Wahrend—"

"Hush!—do not speak, for 'tis mine to take advantage of the single moment that remains. Your sister, Albert!—your sister!—Have mercy upon her! Tell her this sad tale with tenderness. Tell her not that treachery has been rife with me. Tell her not that that which now supports my

head was falsely intruded on my action, and tripped me to my ruin. Tell her not these things; but in their place, and above all other, tell her that I die with her image deeply and purely graven on my heart, and that each pursuit of this final day has been dedicated to her service. Tell her that with my last breath I confirm that which I said in writing an hour ago. Tell her that she has ever commanded my life—that it is for her dear sake I now yield myself—to death!"

These were his words—his very last; for even as they were uttered, his clay-dim eyes were lifted to heaven: a slight shudder spoke the end of mortality, and his noble spirit passed away.

Albert listened a moment, as if in the expectation that there might yet be another farewell to be pronounced; and then, with the certainty of his friend's death gnawing at his heart, he turned to the spot where De Mara and his associate were standing—frozen, as it seemed, with horror.

"Monsters!" cried he, with indignation high in his eyes, "look upon your work of this day! Look upon the noblest, kindest creature that ever graced humanity! Look, look, and shudder!

But think not to escape in your wickedness. His voice impeached you, and mine shall make the city ring with your guilt. Tremble, foul blots, that wreak disgrace on the species to which you belong, for I will this instant denounce you to the law : this instant will I proclaim to speedy justice the detestable crime you have committed."

These words were uttered in a hurried accent, and on the deep feeling of the moment ; and as he concluded them, he rushed from the room.

" Urfort !—Villain !" cried the Count, the instant he was gone : " how came that footstool between me and my adversary ?"

" Nay, how can I tell, my noble patron ? But, doubtless, it must have been your good genius who conjured it there ; for without it, by my troth, your life was not worth a Birmingham shilling ! "

" Devil in disguise of man !" replied the Count ; " you were my evil genius that placed it there, and, by the act, more deeply wounded my honour than yon body was pierced by my sword. Oh, Wahrend ! I was your enemy and deadly foe ; but, if ever there was faith in man, there is faith in me, when I declare, that ten thousand times rather

would I have knelt—ay, knelt to your mercy,—than be the instrument of so foul a construction as this."

Scarcely had the nobleman finished these words, when the loud roll of a drum burst upon the air; and each peal, as it was executed, seemed to approach nearer and nearer to the hotel.

"Hark!" cried Urfort; "it is the city guard; and that young puler has put them on the alert. Fool that I was to let him go! but there is, and ever has been, something in the thoughts he conjures in my mind, that holds back my more prudent resolutions. Count, there is not a moment to lose. We must e'en fly for it."

"I fly not," replied De Mara, haughtily.

"Nay, nay, the thing is very pretty in theory, but it will never do in practice. A moment more, and we shall be on our way to the dungeons of Geneva."

"Better that, than fly to be dishonoured."

"My good Lord, I swear, by all that is good and great, that the whole was purely accidental. Give me but the opportunity to explain it, and you shall be convinced. Besides, remember Madeline.

I would pledge a thousand lives, if I had them, that she will love you all the better for this;—that the very crisis is come when she will yield on any terms;—and is this a moment to throw yourself into the arms of fellows with bayonets and mustachios, when the finest woman in the world is on the point of throwing herself into yours?"

"But how are we to meet? I dare not venture to her."

"I will undertake for every thing, if you will but act under my guidance. Hark! the drum again! Come, let us make our retreat by the back door, and make the best of our way to Kobolt's. There, I warrant, we may lie snug enough, in spite of the sharp scent and piercing eyes of the searchers of Geneva."

De Mara, who had been roused to attention by the words which Urfort had so skilfully supplied about his mistress, and who was willing to hear any thing that could show that the fatal termination of his conflict with Wahrend had arisen from accident, and not from design, yielded to the directions of his guide; and they were speedily tracking their way through obscure streets and winding lanes,

with all of which Urfort appeared to be not a little familiar, towards the abode of Kobolt, where the latter did not doubt that they might lie safely concealed, in spite of the best exertions of the police of the city to discover their retreat.

CHAPTER V.

My husband lives, that Tybalt would have slain ;
And Tybalt's dead, that would have kill'd my husband:
All this is comfort : wherefore weep I then ?
Some word there was, worser than Tybalt's death,
That murther'd me : I would forget it, fain ;
But, oh ! it presses to my memory,
Like damned guilty deeds to sinners' minds ;
Tybalt is dead, and Romeo—banished !
That *banished*, that one word—*banished*,
Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

THERE can be no doubt that, when Albert quitted the presence of De Mara and Urfort, his firm intention was to act according to the words he had uttered ; and, had he waited long enough at the hotel to hear the roll of the city drum, it would have been the signal for his denouncing the de-

stroyers of his friend. The rapidity of his pace, however, had far removed him from the vicinity of the street long before the drum was heard echoing along its line ; and he seemed, by the rate at which he passed, to be seeking relief from the dreary load of thought that was pressing upon his imagination.

His first thoughts still were dedicated to his friend. The wind, as it drove past him, seemed to sweep to his ear the murmurs of the dying man ; the last groan of the expiring Swiss was echoed back again and again to his morbid fancy ; and "revenge upon my murderers" was whispered to his disturbed senses, in the well-known voice of Wahrend.

But ere he had an opportunity of obeying the dictate, other thoughts presented themselves to his mind. Justice does not content itself with the parcel statement of one man, but demands a universal exposition of the first and the last event connected with that which demands its interference. How, then, could he tell of Wahrend's fate without implicating his sister? How could he denounce the evil-doers that had worked his

death, without declaring the share that Madeline had had in that very death ? In these questions there was dreadful agony; and well might they palsy his determination of seeking justice against the monsters who had awarded death to his devoted friend.

But if he could have seen the condition of his sister whilst he was thus holding parley with himself, how much more agony would there have been in the questions ! He had left her in a state bordering upon insensibility, when in obedience to her entreaty he had gone to seek those between whom the conflict was raging. Happy would it have been for her had that oblivion of the senses continued, and had excluded from her seething brain the recollection of the things that had been, and the imagining of the things that might be ! But high destiny would not permit her to escape so easily. She awoke again to life, and with that awakening came all the consciousness of the thousand springs of misery that had overwhelmed her better reason, and made her the merest creature of impulse that was ever driven this way or that by the gusts of passion.

She awoke, and the first object that met her fevered gaze was Wahrend's letter. That alone was sufficient to recall her in a moment to all that had gone before; and she cried aloud for Albert. Each moment seemed an age—each thought an eternity; and she knew not how to contain the eager, troublous, sickening panting of her soul to know all—the worst—the best—at one immediate grasp.

On and on her passion-fed impulse led her, until every thing else was absorbed in the one consideration of the danger of De Mara. The consciousness of that danger restored his image to her heart in all its pristine tenderness; his barbarity and neglect vanished before the idea that at that very moment perhaps his life's thread was trembling beneath the shears of Atropos. That one sole thought embraced her every faculty. She forgot that it was by Wahrend he was threatened: she forgot that she had despatched her brother to prevent or bring her earliest news of the result. She could only figure to her diseased imagination that there was some appalling, horrid peril besetting the chosen of her heart, and that

the whole course of her destiny was involved in that conclusion. Why then did she pause? Why was she there in inactivity, when so dreadful a deed was enacting? "Up, up, Madeline!" she shouted to herself; "rush to the thickest of the danger; and if De Mara must die, show that you can die with him!"

There was a sort of horrible gratification in the thought that these words inspired. It would at least take her from the agonising condition of suspense in which she sat enthralled. It would put her again in motion. It would tempt her into action, and hurry her from the still horror that lent so ghastly a hue to the uncertainty that enshrouded her. There was something like resistance in this new resolution that had seized her; and resistance was more desirable than the present passive endurance which placed her at the mercy of the most afflictive sensations.

Full of this feeling, she started up to seek the Count. With nervous and unsteady step she descended to the street. The door was opened; and with something which could hardly be called a purpose offering itself to her inconclusive mind,

she passed the threshold, and was ready to launch herself, even in her present most deplorable condition, into a world little fit to understand the feelings that agitated her.

But at this very moment Albert approached the house. He saw the action of his sister,—guessed its intention,—and hurried to her side. The sight of her brother recalled to her memory the errand on which he had been sped, and she gave him a look that asked a thousand questions at once.

The only answer that Albert afforded her was to take her by the hand, and conduct her back to the apartment which she had just quitted; she obeying his movement with the facility of a child in leading-strings. Her look still inquired: her attitude was still that of a person willing to listen to the minutest sound; but she uttered no word—she asked no question.

Albert too was silent, for he knew not how to address his sister on the subject of the scene he had just come from witnessing. No suspicion of the giving way of his sister's intellect had passed across his mind; and he had, therefore, received all her observations as the pure and unsophisti-

cated expressions of her feelings. And to what did those observations seem to tend? She had expressed hatred for De Mara—she had expressed regard for Wahrend. She had dwelt no less on the goodness, the kindness, the warm-heartedness of the latter, than she had appeared to loathe the very name of the former. To a certain extent Albert had all his life been labouring under a mistake as to the nature of her feelings towards the Swiss. Before the consummate skill of Valdi had bestowed the sense of hearing on him, while yet at Unwalden, and with little knowledge of the world for his guide, he had not been competent to form a judgment on the character of the acquaintanceship between his sister and Wahrend. He had seen them continually together; he had observed that they sought each other's society; and the natural conclusion of his boyish mind was that Madeline had an affection and a kindness of regard towards her companion. But to whatever that had amounted, Albert had been fully sensible that while De Mara's sun was in the zenith, Wahrend's star was under an eclipse. But it was in judging of the events that had taken place

since the reappearance of his friend that he had made his grand mistake. The Count from that period had been in disgrace, while the Swiss on the other hand had been received with comparative favour. It was true that that favour had so far declined as to induce Wahrend to seek a final explanation with his mistress; but equally true was it that on that very interview he had been received into sufficient confidence to be elected Madeline's champion and the messenger of her indignation to the Frenchman.

This was the train of argument that Albert had suggested to his mind, when the circumstances of the day had compelled him to quit his more favourite themes of thought for the purpose of interfering in the situations, which Wahrend first, and subsequently Madeline, had laid before him: and the consequence of the conclusions to which he had come was a firm belief in his mind that Madeline's real affections were wrapped up in the Swiss, and that it was for his sake that she had displayed all that eagerness and anxiety to induce her brother to seek the parties, and avert the threatened mischief. Albert had the more readily

adopted this suggestion, because it was in accordance with his own feelings ; and when a picture presents two points of view, we naturally adopt that which is most in harmony with our creed and perceptions.

With these sentiments strongly pressing on the imagination of the youth, the silence which he observed towards his sister on his return need be no matter of wonder. It was on Wahrend that she had bestowed her heart :—it was to save him that she had called on her brother in the hour of peril ; and the only answer that he was now able to make to that call would come in confirmation of her worst fears—to the destruction of the last glimpse of hope that might yet be extant in her bosom.

The expression of Albert's features, however, told Madeline the feelings of his soul, for it spoke horror and dismay. His feelings had not yet recovered from the shock they had experienced on first bursting into the room where his friend lay extended in the agonies of death ; and these feelings were painted in his countenance in fearful colours. It was this that made the sister preserve

the silence that Albert seemed to have prescribed; for she too well interpreted the meaning of his countenance not to imagine that the disclosure, which as yet lay beneath, would, when made clear and express, break upon her alarmed senses with the awful terror of a thunderbolt.

But this could only endure for a while. Madeline's soul was made of impatience; and she had ever been more sensitive to the infliction of suspense than of execution. "Brother," at length cried she, "tell the whole in a word. Your look informs that a dreadful fate has attended on the strife: but, in the name of every holy thing, make not the present evil worse by adding the torture of delay which conjures to my mind things perchance more horrible than the reality itself."

"What am I to say, my sister?" replied Albert.—"What is the task you require at my hands?"

"A word, a single word!" vehemently exclaimed Madeline. "In one word tell me the fortune of the day."

Albert shook his head mournfully. "I dare not," whispered he.

" Dare not ! Then let conviction do its worst ; for not even phrenzy can conjure aught so dreadful as that which trembles on your lips for utterance, and unmans you ere you give it sound."

Another pause ensued—Albert afraid to speak, and the sister so immersed in the depth of her fears that for a minute she forgot the presence of her brother. But presently her eye was fixed upon him, and she exclaimed—almost screamed—" I must be told all :—I must know it to the minutest incident ! for this is my act : I was its evil author, and already do I feel it imposing a withering and irrevocable curse upon my heart. Speak out, thou messenger of blood ! Tell me how he died !—not why—for that, O God !—O God !—I know too well."

" He died," returned Albert, in a voice almost choked with feeling,—" he died with your name last upon his lips, bequeathing kindness and blessings."

" Then he is dead !—But, no—I will not believe it ! Awhile ago, he was in health, for Urfort spoke not of illness ;—then where should death have found a passage to creep in ? "

" At the sword's point of his ruthless foe. There entered death, full and at once, nor needed the customary show of sickness or disease to forerun his march."

" Still my poor heart refuses to give credence. Why should he be dead, and leave me living? He was noble, admirable, and gallant; and I but a worm of the world in the comparison. Yet I have heard that death ever delights to prey on the more exalted victim."

" My sister—"

" Call me not sister! Let me be kin to none. I am a monster unutterable, and the finger of scorn shall hunt me to my grave, and write the epitaph on my mouldering bones. Alas! I thought that he had injured me; and now I find 'twas I that injured him. I was the fell sorceress that plotted his most hateful destruction; and he rewarded the sin with his dying blessing—ay, ay, a blessing, indeed, it will be. I will go sit by his corpse, that the gaping wound shall bleed afresh, and that my cruel heart may indulge in its wickedness to the last, and revel in perceiving

how the noblest life the world could boast has been spent to gratify its miserable spleen."

Albert would again have spoken, though his mind was in that state of perturbation that he could hardly measure the words that would have departed from his lips, when the door opened, and a stranger entered. He walked up to the spot where the youth was standing, and said stiffly, but not uncivilly, "I believe, Sir, your name is Albert Schvolen?"

He, who was thus questioned, almost mechanically replied, "It is."

"You will excuse the nature of the errand on which I come," continued the other; "but, as an officer of the city guard, it is my duty to require your immediate attendance before the syndics. I am just come from the Count de Mara's hotel, and find that he has fled, leaving the corpse of the unfortunate M. Wahrend without—— "

What further the officer was about to say was interrupted by Madeline, who, with an hysteric scream, exclaimed—"De Mara alive! De Mara not dead!—O, say those blessed words again! Speak

them once more, and save me from the fearful doubt that it was my own deceitful imagination that coined the words, to cozen me with an empty nothing."

"I am sorry, Madam," returned the officer, "that it should be any wise gratifying to you to hear that the Count De Mara has fled from the hands of justice, leaving his antagonist a corpse. The fact, however, is indisputable: I saw the latter with my own eyes, and the landlord of the hotel pledged himself to the former."

"Then I am happy, indeed!—and this man, who calls himself my brother, is foiled in his cruel attempt to persuade me that the Count was killed."

"I, Madeline!" cried Albert; "I attempt to persuade you that the Count was dead! Alas! I knew too well that poor Wahrend was the victim; for I myself received his dying words."

"I am glad to hear you say that, Sir," interrupted the officer; "for it will make you a most useful witness. I must trouble you to accompany me."

"If," replied Albert, "you will be so good as to wait one minute below, while I speak a few words to my sister, I will then attend you to whatever place you may think necessary."

The officer bowed in reply to this request, and showed his acquiescence in it by quitting the apartment.

"My sister, what means this?" demanded Albert, as soon as the stranger had withdrawn. "A minute before this man entered, you were, with me, deploring Wahrend's unhappy death; and now, because you hear that De Mara has escaped, the whole tone of your voice has changed, and you bring an accusation against me, the foundation of which is beyond even the wit of man to discover."

"Albert!—Albert!—add not dissimulation to the cruelty that you have already practised on your sister's heart: your words told me that the Count was dead, and that Wahrend lived."

"Would that I could have told you that! Would that the Count had died a thousand deaths, so that the brave and generous Wahrend had been spared!"

"I understand you," exclaimed Madeline: "you have failed in deceiving me, and now you go to denounce De Mara, who, in his own defence, slew the Swiss."

"Slew the Swiss!—and is that your only tribute to the man who has died in protecting you from the base affronts which De Mara heaped upon you?"

"I know of no affronts! The words you utter strike on some ancient chord too loose and ineffectual to vibrate to the appeal. What De Mara was is all forgotten. I only know him NOW—an injured man,—plotted against—decoyed;—and I the wicked instrument of all this fell design."

"Madeline, Madeline!" cried the youth, "what means this fearful change? Do you not remember his cruel acting at the ball?—Do you not remember his treacherous introduction of Mademoiselle Basault, to harass your soul to the very verge of ruin?—Do you not remember his neglect?—his contumely?—Do you not remember your own commission to Wahrend?"

"Yes, yes," exclaimed she with vehemence; "that I do remember! The rest has passed away,

and well-nigh left my memory a blank ; but that fell commission still has place within my soul ;—wicked, wicked monster that I was to plot against so dear a life !"

"A most dear life has, indeed, been plotted against,—and to the most fatal consummation. Oh, Wahrend, Wahrend, let not thy fled spirit look this way, for if it has aught of mortality yet remaining, deeply will it writhe to witness this bitter return for the dearest love that man ever bore to woman."

"Wahrend!" cried the agitated girl ; "what of him ? Ay, now I remember ;—and here—here are tears."

"Give them to his memory, for he has wept tears of blood for you."

"I would ; but something goes across my half-forgetful brain, to which my tears seem still more consecrate. I will go seek De Mara, and he shall change my grief to joyous smiles."

"That share of guilt," cried Albert, "is at least prevented. The murderer has fled—De Mara will be sought for in vain."

Madeline screamed aloud as her brother spoke

these words. "Now flow, tears! break, heart! burst, every sense of feeling and of passion!" she exclaimed; "for cause enough there is for all of you! De Mara fled, and Madeline desolate!—Let him, who can, add a new torture to that one doom of fate."

"Of whom speak you these things?"

"Albert, let not another word pass your lips. 'Tis time to act; for too long have you dallied,—too deeply have you wounded your sister's heart with miserable delay.—Heretofore, I have entreated —now I command!"

"Sister——"

"Silence! I say; for I will have nought but deeds,—ay, by deeds have I suffered, and by deeds will I answer. You are my only companion;—you have ever pretended to my best affections. Well! I will tell you how to win them for an eternity. Go forth, and seek the runaway.—Search the universal world, till you have found his retreat."

"Should I do so," said Albert, "it would be to deliver him into the hands of justice."

"Ay, to my justice," interrupted Madeline,

"and you shall be the executioner. He must be found, Albert;—he must be hunted to some corner, where no escape is possible. And then—the change of souls!—oh, shake not your head; for even though you could shake rocks and firm-set mountains with like facility, my resolution you could not shake. No word, I say, no word!—I pray not—I entreat not—I petition not:—but I command. See you that it be done. This night I give you for the search: but to-morrow's sun will set in dreadful blood, if my ordaining be not accomplished."

These strange mad words that spoke her palsied intellect were uttered with fearful vehemence; and her countenance was in terrible accordance with the sentence they pronounced. Ere Albert could reply, she fled the room, muttering as she went—"To-morrow! Remember to-morrow!"

Albert's was a dreadful situation. The sister, to whom his affections had heretofore been knitted as intimately as life to his own pulses, had threatened him with strange and undiscoverable designs that must bring in their train all that was most horrible and destroying. What was it that

she intended?—what dark and afflictive deed was it at which she had hinted, whereby to consummate to-morrow's disappointment? Her language was frightful,—her manner terrible; but still more frightful and terrible was the hidden mystery with which she had closed her last words. Had she but told the scheme that fired her brain, his skill might have been taxed to provide an antidote. But what human knowledge could forerun an evil based in obscurity?—threatened, but not devolved? Her command was upon him to seek De Mara; that alone was the condition on which she consented to forego her resolution. But how was he to find the delinquent nobleman?—where was he to look for one, who, under Urfort's guidance, would doubtless take such precautions that not even the keen-scented police of the city should be able to trace his steps? It was hopeless—all hopeless, and nugatory.

But still something must be done to hinder Madeline's determination, or at least to gain that knowledge of her intention which might enable him to counteract it. It was to this last thought that he more fondly clung, for even should he

succeed in finding the Frenchman's retreat, there would follow the dreadful task of employing his dear-prized secret in such a way as to put it at the mercy of him who had earned, by this last act of the death of Wahrend, his most unchangeable abhorrence. Still was his cry—"No, never will I employ the gift of Heaven on the basest of mankind!" The secret still was between him and Madeline. Still should it remain so. And at that moment of thought and resolution the idea with wild rapidity entered his mind, that at length he had found the much-desired means of possessing full knowledge of Madeline's intentions. Her soul his, and his soul hers—and then indeed he might hope to counteract the fatal design that was hovering o'er her brain, waiting still more fatal execution,—yes! Transfusion of the Soul should pass between them.

But she had given him but short shrift for consideration:—she might even in her present agitation make that shortness still shorter. There was not a minute to be lost; and that very instant would he seek her chamber, and proceed to the undertaking that was to obtain for him the full possession of her every thought and feeling.

He had already reached the door with this resolution rife in his mind, when he was met on the threshold by the officer of the city guard.

"I am sorry, M. Schvolen," said he, "that it is out of my power to allow you further time. I am momentarily expected by the syndics, and it is as much as my office is worth to delay any longer."

"Only for a quarter of an hour," cried Albert, anxiously—"only for half a quarter of an hour."

"It is impossible, young gentleman," returned the officer: "as long as it was in my power to oblige, I was desirous of doing so; but the latest moment has now arrived, and we must proceed to the hall of justice."

Albert would have again entreated, but he saw by the determined accent and manner of the man that remonstrance was in vain; and therefore, without further remark, he accompanied his *custos* whither he led the way.

CHAPTER VI.

Arib. —— We may talk of Heaven,
May gaze with rapture on yon starry regions;
But who shall lend us wings to reach their height?
Impossible!
Seof. There is a way yet left,
And only one.
Arib. Ha! speak!
Seof. Her sudden flight.
Arib. Oh! by what friendly means? Be swift to answer,
Nor waste the precious minutes with delay.
ROWE'S ROYAL CONVERT.

THE pace at which Urfort led his uneasy patron towards Kobolt's dwelling, much resembled that at which the nobleman had last approached the same abode. But the feelings of the Count on the present occasion were very different. Then, in spite of all the rebuffs he had received from

his mistress, he still possessed that gaiety of spirit which was one of the grand characteristics of his disposition ; and the excitement of the new features of temper and habit which the stranger just rescued from the water displayed, served to give an air of romance and singularity to the whole adventure. Now, on the contrary, the whole aspect of affairs was sombre and heavy. His rival was slain,—slain in a manner which even the Count's own odious rules of honour could not justify ; and he himself was a flyer from the peril of justice. But however painful this view of the subject might be, De Mara was not a man to allow such sensations to hold too long dominion over him : and had not the past been backed by a question of what the future might yield, he would soon have got over those feelings which we saw displayed in his first angry words to Urfort, after Albert had departed from the apartment of slaughter. But that which was to come seemed to threaten an ominous interference with his passion for Madeline. The vigilance of the police of Geneva, though it had not been able to discover the murderer of Deboos, might be more

successful in finding the spot whither he had retreated ; and the certain result of that would be his being dragged from it like a criminal to answer for that in which he had, indeed, been a criminal. But even supposing he escaped the search of justice, in what manner would Madeline look upon the events of that day ? He had no reason to doubt that Wahrend had spoken the truth, when he asserted that it was with the maiden's own consent that he presented himself as the champion of her offended cause ; and it therefore seemed more than probable that the feeling (whatever it might be) that had dictated that course to her, would be infinitely heightened by the failure and death of him whom she had appointed as her defender. It was true that Urfort had treated this matter lightly, and had pledged himself that Madeline should disregard the fatal transaction of the day. But in what respect was Urfort's judgment better than his ?— his, which seemed to be supported by nature and common sense, both of which appeared to insist on Madeline's deepest resentment of the painful termination of the conflict which had taken

place? But had he ground for believing that Urfort had really given his sincere opinion?—This was a question which had once or twice flitted across his mind during the short period that he had been availing himself of this man's services; and now that there appeared to be nothing but mischief emanating from his councils, it came with tenfold force on De Mara's recollection, and the result was to awaken a strong suspicion that for some reason which he could not divine, (unless it was merely that of securing the promised hundred louis,) the adventurer, whom he had taken into his pay, was leading him on with vain expectations which he himself never hoped to realize.

These were the thoughts that worked their way into the Frenchman's imagination, as he accompanied Urfort in silence through various back ways and obscure windings to the hostel of Kobolt. As they approached, the day began to close upon them; the clouds came up heavy and thick from the southern horizon, and the gathering mists speedily changed into a fast drizzling rain, that threw an air of discomfort and darkness over the face of nature, and was little calculated to improve

the feelings which had taken possession of De Mara.

At length they arrived at the well-known porch; and, as the night-hour was but early, obtained more easy ingress than when last they visited the house in company. Kobolt executed one of his best smiles and most hospitable bows when he perceived the entry of the nobleman; but the latter seemed to be in no humour to indulge the open disposition of his host, for he passed on without any notice of the salutation that was so courteously proffered.

Kobolt, however, was not to be so easily rebuffed. "I am afraid," cried he, "that it is destined you are always to come here with a wet jacket; but I believe I can this time supply your honour with a more suitable change of raiment."

"I need none," replied the Count, testily; "a corner by your kitchen-fire will soon remedy the damp I feel from the rain."

"Now, that is unlucky," cried Kobolt; "but it is ever the case on a Friday. I have two or three louts in the kitchen over a sheep-bargain, and a bottle of the thinnest; and I fear your honour will not like to mix with such clodpoles."

"No, no," hastily returned De Mara, "I would not be seen by any one, for I am in no humour for society just now."

"Had not your honour better step up-stairs and change your apparel, while my wife in the mean time shall light a fire in another room?"

"Let the latter be done as soon as possible," replied the Count; "and I will in the interim be content to walk your corridor."

Kobolt on this called his wife, and gave her the necessary instructions. He himself, however, did not seem in any humour to quit his guests, probably thinking it but civil to warm them with his conversation, till the crackling wood gave token of a more genial heat. After showing the twain up-stairs to the corridor, and watching them pace its antiquated floor for some minutes in utter silence, as if deeply revolving on the foregone or the future, he seemed to think that it was necessary for him to start some subject for conversation; and he therefore said to Urfort, with whom he possibly thought it safer to make the opening than with the more distant stranger,—"Why, how now, old friend of my black corks, is it possible that the weather has so chilled you that you

cannot find words for a gossip? For my part, I thought you were proof against wind and rain, and that nothing could stop your tongue."

"The wise man, Master Kobolt," returned Urfort, "knows how to talk in season."

"But yours," replied the host, "I always reckoned to be a tongue for all seasons."

"And yet you have seen me silent enough."

"Never but once, on my fay! and that was when that strange, tall, hectoring-looking woman came here to seek you. Egad! when she found you, you seemed in no great humour to talk to her. By-the-bye, Urfort, what has become of that respectable lady? was it she that ——"

"I remember nothing about her," interrupted the other, doggedly; "and it would be as well, Master Kobolt, if you would take the hint from your guests, and wait till they speak to you before you speak to them."

"Well, well, man, never be hurt; if I had known that the lady had been a sore subject with you, I would never have mentioned her; though as to forgetting her, that is out of the question; for never, before or since, have I looked upon one of so striking an aspect or so commanding

a figure. Why, she seemed to twirl even you round her thumb; and when she told you that you were to go to that Madame—Madame—what was her name?—and send her on a wild goose errand, the devil knows where, you seemed ——"

"For God's sake," cried Urfort, eagerly, "do cease this trash! You are disturbing his honour, and you are disturbing me: the best thing you can do is to go and see if the fire be lighted, for I am sure this place is enough to chill the ardour of the hottest lover that ever cried *peccavi* in July."

Kobolt seemed inclined to say something further, but Urfort almost pushed him from the corridor, as he repeated, "Come, do go, and hurry the good dame. She must have gone to sleep in the chimney-corner instead of making a blaze there."

"What was that fellow talking about?" said De Mara, as soon as Kobolt was gone. "I scarcely listened to what he said, and yet there was something about a female whose description would almost have made me swear that I knew to whom he alluded.

Nay, I hardly know myself whom he was

talking about," replied Urfort; "your knowing landlords think they must always find something to say; and the consequence is that half they speak must be invention. But come, my Lord, shall we descend? I think we shall find the room ready by this time."

When they reached the apartment they found that Kobolt's wife had not deserved the reproach which Urfort had insinuated against her, for there was already a fire blazing in the chimney, and the room appeared a paradise when compared with the chilly and darksome corridor which they had just quitted.

For a while they remained silent. But the Count's agent, with his accustomed shrewdness, in part read what was going on in his employer's mind, and he felt that he could not do better than break in upon the train of thinking that was being pursued there, before it obtained that determined character which disinclines him who undergoes it to change it to a totally different bearing.

"Is it not high time," cried he, by way of introducing the conversation which he thought best calculated to serve his interest—"Is it not high time to think of the steps that shall be taken as to

Madeline? She should not be left too long to herself."

"I have no vein for the subject," replied the Count, moodily; "I have no vein for any thing but to curse the hour when I was fool enough to drag you out of the water."

"Nay, that is your affair, more than it is mine; and therefore you have my leave to curse it as much as you please. But how long is this ceremony of excommunication likely to last?"

"As long as I have memory of the dishonour of which you made me this day the unfortunate instrument."

"Dishonour!" cried Urfort; "why, you ran him through as fairly and as neatly as Orlando Furioso himself could have done."

"Did you not see the man's dying eyes demand—'How came that footstool there?'—I ask the same; for it has wounded my honour even more deeply than it wounded his body."

"I thought we had done with that foolish subject. How can I tell how the footstool got there? Perhaps it got there of itself; perhaps my eagerness to be in at the death (though, by the bye, the

death, just then, was likely to be on the wrong side) made me kick it with my foot; and though a footstool will not roll like a snowball, yet a very energetic kick might have sent it even further than this one travelled."

"Oh that it were possible that accident, and not intention——"

"I am sure of it. Why, you do not suppose that I would have done such a thing for the purpose? I should have had too much respect for your feelings, though, to be sure, they were in danger of being hurt either way."

"Urfort, Urfort, I like not your style. I can easily understand that you concern yourself but little as to the manner in which the Swiss was killed; but I cannot be so callous as you. Life staked against life, I had a right to do my best."

"And very well you did so," interrupted the fellow; "but let us forget this ugly business, for things more desirable ask our observation. Madeline must be seen; and, on one condition, I will undertake the peril."

"Madeline must indeed be seen," echoed De

Mara, with a sigh, "though I hardly hope any thing from it. But your condition?"

"Simply this—that I may have the command of another noble regiment of black corks."

"I do not understand you."

"And yet it is plain enough," cried Urfort; "Kobolt will not part with his troops, without certain little shining counters in exchange. I have none to give him; but your bond stands good to me for a hundred. If you will agree to forestall the date, and make the bond prompt payment, I will undertake to see the girl the first thing to-morrow morning."

"By Heaven! I guessed as much," exclaimed the Count, in an angry tone; "but I am not yet so blind as not to be able to see through your shallow proposition. You would secure the remainder of your pay; and then, away flies the bird! No, no, sir; it is not yet quite come to that. I have long suspected that my first hundred louis had been spent in vain; but I shall be careful how I am twice a dupe."

"And do you think that I am to run the risk of being handled by the police of Geneva, without such a trifle as this being conceded?"

"You may spare yourself your powers of oratory. You know the terms of our agreement; and, rely upon it, I will not yield a tittle of them. On the other hand, perform your part of the contract, and I will scrupulously perform mine."

"I shall do no more," cried Urfort, surlily, "without touching the gold."

"Fellow," replied the Count, "would to Heaven you had pronounced as much yesterday! then, at least, I should have been free from this dreadful stain upon my conscience. Now, I feel like a guilty thing. I am afraid to meet the eye of man: I start at each noise, and am ready to conjure every form, every shape, every shadow, into the thing I dread."

At this moment Kobolt entered the apartment, and announced that there was a person inquiring for Urfort and his companion.

"So much for your boasted retreat," cried De Mara; "already are we traced hither; and in another moment I shall be on my way to Geneva like a felon."

His fears, however, were relieved by the person who was making the inquiry entering the room. It was Altoz, who, having heard from the landlord

of the Count's hotel what had taken place, together with the information that his friend and Urfort had departed together, immediately conjectured that the place of their retreat would, in the first instance, be Kobolt's retired dwelling; and he had accordingly followed them thither with all speed.

"My friend," cried the Count, the moment he recognised him, "this is kind indeed. I have had dreadful thoughts since I parted with you this morning; and the worst was, that the time was come when I was about to be deserted by all those whom my heart held dear."

"Then, my dear Count," returned the Chevalier, "you must have been thinking of yourself, not me. Your silly pursuit of this girl made you desert us; but we never deserted you even in those days of neglect. Why, then, should you think that now, when you have begun again to show yourself a man, your friends were likely to forsake you?"

"Altoz, Altoz, know you what has taken place?"

"To be sure I do. I went in search of you to your hotel, when Granski told me all that had

happened. While I was there the police came in, so that I was not a little pleased to learn that you had made a safe retreat; and as I was told who your companion was, I easily guessed where you had taken up your quarters."

"But you heard not how he fell?"

"I could not well hear that, for, as I understood, no third person was present but Urfort. Tush, man! never look so sad: it was certainly a little awkward that no one but your own servant was present; but the thing will blow over after a three days' bustle, and the character of De Mara will stand even higher than before."

"Think you so?" cried the Count, anxiously.

"It cannot be otherwise. Besides, what matters it what the puritans of Geneva may think about the affair? You never intended making that place your home, and the gayer world of Paris will give you credit for the adventure."

"That is exactly what I have been endea vouring to force upon my noble patron," cried Urfort, "and I am glad to be so ably backed. Why, after all, nothing has happened but the pure fortune of war. Once or twice I thought

it would be the Count who would have to lie still, and M. Wahrend to fly. Well, then, it changed again, and at length a lucky lunge settled the affair. Were my patron's chance mine, I should think myself well out of the scrape, for the Swiss had a gallant thrust, and lunged with as short an interval as it was ever my fortune to witness."

"I am glad to hear you bear testimony to the Switzer's skill and the continuance of the combat," exclaimed the Chevalier, "for both those points will weigh much in favour of the Count, should he be unfortunate enough to fall within the clutch of the busy meddlers of this city. But at present, thank Heaven, he is snugly hid in a corner where no one would dream of searching for him. So, come, De Mara, throw this melancholy to the dogs: let us discuss matters over a bottle of the best, and drown reflection in the depth of our beakers."

The Count, though he longed to tell his friend the whole of the particulars of the conflict, whence arose his uneasiness, could not nerve himself to the task: besides which, he was still trying to

hope that, in spite of Urfort's sneering manner, the false step of Wahrend had really originated in an accident; and he was, therefore, unwilling to lay too great a stress upon the circumstance that had so unceasingly harassed his mind since the death of the Swiss.

"Your proposal," cried Urfort, "is just to my taste, and I have no doubt that ere long we shall bring his Lordship to the same way of thinking. Besides, I have a word or two to say about the little mischief-maker that has made all this confusion; and I calculate that the wisest counsellor we can call to our aid is a batch of Kobolt's black corks. Under permission, I will make bold to order them into the presence;"—and with these words, he went forth to seek his host.

"Altoz," said De Mara, as soon as he was gone, "I like not that fellow: nay, I am almost becoming superstitious about him, and think that I have met my evil genius in him. He must be got rid of."

"I never supposed," cried the other, "that you proposed keeping him beyond your present

need. If he has served that, in the devil's name let him go."

"He has served no good purpose for me; and what I fear is, that the longer I retain him, the more mischief he will effect."

"Is it really the Count de Mara that talks thus? I should have thought that of all men you would have had too much confidence in your own skill and penetration, to fear that one of your tools should transgress the boundary which you have prescribed him."

"I thought so once myself."

"And will again to-morrow. Come, come, you are somewhat agitated by the adventures of to-day."

"But this Urfort hangs over me like a frightful dream."

"Awake from your sleep then, and his power is at an end. You have often favoured me with your advice, now take mine. Press forward the object for which you retained him, and then discharge him with his promised fee, and so close all further connexion with him.—But, hush,—he comes!"

" I have ordered a batch of the best," said he of whom they had been talking, as he entered the room, " and in token of my commission bring a handful by way of sample."

" Five bottles are a very tolerable handful, Master Urfort," cried the Chevalier: " you must have a pretty notion of a batch if your handful is so bounteous."

" You shall see that anon, when Kobolt comes with his load ; and in the mean time allow me to propose you a toast—' Mademoiselle Schvolen, and a speedy meeting between her and the Count."

" Ay, ay," cried De Mara, " the thing sounds well enough as a toast ; but how is the fact to be accomplished ? "

" That was just what I was going to explain to you, when we had that slight difference about the hundred louis. I trust you are not inexorable."

" Indeed I am !" answered the nobleman, gravely : " I have had but little return, as yet, for my first hundred."

But if my patron would but condescend to reflect

how near he is to gaining all his wishes. Within two days Madeline shall be yours."

"If that be true," replied the Count, "I see not why you should be unwilling to wait so short a time for the payment of our contract."

Urfort, with all his cool impudence, hesitated for a moment, as if he could not at once find a reply to so close a corollary upon his own proposition; and, in the mean while, the Chevalier took an opportunity of saying—"Come, my fine fellow, I am glad to find that modesty has overtaken you at last; and, as I love to reward merit, I will pledge myself to add fifty pieces to the Count's hundred, provided you do not exceed the two days."

"A bargain!" cried Urfort; and, in good truth, I think it would be but reasonable were the Count to add a second fifty; for the plan I have brewing in my brain is one of no little risk to myself."

"And to what does the risk amount?"

"No less than that of daring the penetration of the watch-dogs of Geneva, by undertaking to see Madeline, and giving her some wholesome counsel."

" But what benefit do you expect from such an interview ? " asked Altoz.

" Simply, the benefit of inducing the lady to throw herself into the Count's arms. Do you think I could not see, from Wahrend's own account of the business, what was the motive that had actuated her ? "

" How know you what Wahrend's own account of the business was ? " demanded the Count.

" Oh ! your Lordship must excuse me, but I could not help thinking that there was no harm in listening at a key-hole."

Altoz gave the Count, who was about to express his indignation, a look as much as to remind him of the advice he had given him when Urfort was absent from the room, and then interfered more openly by remarking—" Pshaw ! what have we to do with the delicate expedients by which Urfort gains his intelligence ? For Heaven's sake, man, go on with your scheme, or the time will slip by when it can be executed."

" Not that either, Chevalier," returned the fellow ; " for I do not think we can do any thing till to-morrow."

"Ah, to-morrow again! That is always your cry," said the Count; "and I have ever found it a day at which you were never able to arrive."

"I never had such hopes before of immediate success," answered Urfort. "It is quite clear that things are now at a crisis; for, though the Swiss was too simple to read her heart aright, I know enough of women to perceive that it was mere desperation at the thought of the Count's departure, that induced her to adopt any means that appeared likely to prevent that feared event."

"But even supposing that was the case, the death of Wahrend must have changed her."

"Not a jot! It has confirmed her twenty-strong! The girl was nearly mad at the thought of your quitting Geneva, and a feather might have guided her. But when she now finds that your encounter with the Swiss has actually made you depart the city, the mere thought of meeting you elsewhere will be hailed by her like a vision from Heaven."

"Would that I could be sure of that!" cried De Mara; "but I fear that Albert will have been beforehand with us, and imbued her mind with

such a series of suspicions that to move her from his side will be impossible."

"Do not alarm yourself," said Urfort; "Madeline is a true woman, and will have her will. What we have hitherto wanted is to find a motive sufficiently strong to induce her to quit Geneva. As good luck will have it, that is now ready-made to our hands; and I will consent to sacrifice my hundred and fifty louis (will your Lordship allow me to say—my two hundred louis?) if she be not on my first hint willing to pursue you to any place you may be pleased to name. The blood is up within her, and has stolen a march upon her reason. What the deuce, then, have we to do with logic and argument, when the principle by which she is actuated is that which sets aside both the one and the other?"

"I think," said Altoz, who had attentively been weighing all that had been said,—"I think that there is much justice in Urfort's position;—and the more, because it elucidates satisfactorily the motive that induced her to make Wahrend her confidant."

De Mara shook his head, as he cried, "Even

allowing that that is true, it is not yet shown that the feeling is strong enough within her to resist the machinations that my arch-foe, her brother, will raise to clog my motions. I like not this scheme, and yet cannot propose aught else to take its place;—for, how it is I know not, some foul and nameless thing seems to sit upon my brain, and to bear down each effort that I make to free myself from its painful influence."

"Gently, gently!" exclaimed the Chevalier. "Now you talk of schemes, I think I have hit upon one that is certain of persuading her to quit Geneva."

"No scheme is wanting," cried Urfort, testily, "but the assurance that it will lead her to the spot where the Count is to be found."

"Be not too obstinate, Master Urfort!" said Altoz; "my project is quite compatible with yours, and the two may go hand in hand."

"Come,—the plan, the plan?" exclaimed De Mara, impatiently.

"You remember," continued his friend, in obedience to the call; "you remember the motive that first induced her to quit Unwalden, and

equally well you must remember the eagerness with which she embraced our offer at the road-side inn to conduct her to Madame Lalande."

"It was that she might recover her lost uncle."

"Exactly so. Now, it seems to me that I might, without any suspicion on her part, send her a note to-morrow morning, or any other time, to say, that having learned by chance that a letter to Madame Lalande was lying at the dead-letter office at Geneva, and as I knew that she was the nearest friend of the deceased lady, I had taken the liberty to procure it from the post-office, and enclose it to her."

"But what is this enclosed letter to intimate? For it is in that, I presume, that the strength of your scheme lies."

"Of course," replied Altoz; "the inclosed letter must purport to be from Seaton, stating, that for particular reasons, which should be explained hereafter, he had relented of his obduracy towards the Orphans, and was desirous that they should meet him immediately at Unwalden, whither he had gone for that purpose."

"A very fine plan," cried Urfort, contemptuously, "if it were not for two or three fatal objections. In the first place, who is to undertake to write this letter in Seaton's hand-writing?"

"A disguised hand," said the Count, who seemed to have adopted the Chevalier's scheme at once; "a disguised hand may be mentioned among the things to be explained hereafter."

"And the post-marks?"

"Oh, come; I am glad," said Altoz, "that your objections are becoming so frivolous already. It will be strange, indeed, if a skilful hand cannot be found to imitate them."

"And why is the girl to be sent to Unwalden?" continued Urfort, doggedly; "of all places in the world I should have thought that the worst, for it is the only one where she is known and can find ready protection."

"But, on the other hand," said De Mara, "it is the only one where it is natural for her uncle to send for her. His name, and that of Unwalden, are so associated in her mind, that the very name of the two together will prevent her inquiring too

minutely into the other probabilities of the letter. My dear Chevalier, I think your plan admirable."

"And I," said Urfort, "think it abominable. It never will go hand in hand with mine."

"Why not?" cried Altoz. "You purpose going to acquaint Madeline with the Count's departure: before you get there, my letter will have prepared her for a journey; and all that will remain for you to do (supposing that you have judged her disposition rightly) will be to undertake that De Mara's course shall lead him to Unwalden; while, on the other hand, if she declines further interview with De Mara, we have in another way insured her journey to Unwalden, whither she may be followed and secured."

"By my hopes of the maiden," exclaimed De Mara, vehemently, "I never before gave my Chevalier credit for half so much talent. We will no longer talk of master and scholar, but both be Doctors together."

"I am glad to meet with the approbation of so profound a genius," said Altoz, with a laugh; "and, now, have you any further commands for me? If not, I will back to the city, and put my

scribbling powers to the test in preparation of to-morrow's missive."

"A thousand thanks!" returned De Mara; "I have but one other commission, and that you can perform any time between this and our next interview. I fortunately availed myself of my letters of credit the day before yesterday to their full extent; and you will find in my bed-room a red box studded with nails, which contains the gold I received. This must be secured, or I shall have no means of carrying on the project. I trust to your care to bring it with you to-morrow, in a chaise ready to convey me to Unwalden."

"You may rely on me," said Altoz, "if it be possible to baffle the vigilance of the police."

"I was going to add, that you must get my pistols also; but it will be as well not to tempt their observation too much."

"You can have mine for the journey," replied the Chevalier. "I will bring them in the chaise along with the box, if it be possible to get it away from the hotel. If not, you may command such ready money as I have by me. And now—*au revoir!* To-morrow, I trust, will see you in full

action, and every thing in train for a successful *dénouement*, with the news that Madeline has the start of you on the road to Unwalden."

CHAPTER VII.

Damned paper!
Black as the ink that's on thee: senseless bauble!
Art thou a fœdarie for this act, and look'st
So virgin-like without?

CYMBELINE.

URFORT was not at all satisfied with the determination of the Count to adopt the Chevalier's advice in opposition to his own, for he was one of those who never entertain the slightest doubt of the all-sufficiency of their powers of judgment. He therefore withdrew from the council in no very good humour; and had it not been for the hundred louis, with their promised addition, which tickled him to the task, he would that very

night have bidden farewell to Geneva and the Count for ever.

"So," quoth he to himself, "this after all is the value set on my judgment and knowledge of the world. The vain Frenchman, not content with having an opinion of his own, must even set the lame-witted conjectures of his friend above me. By Bacchus, if it were not for the gold, without which I am a beggar, I would leave the pair to their precious manœuvres, and, when they found out their folly, only indulge them with a laugh of contempt. Never did I read a character more clearly than that of this girl;—never was a woman more ripe for mischief:—and now the whole is to be baffled and set aside, because, forsooth, this Altoz, in his dotage, must begin to invent as well as his betters. Would to Heaven I could have persuaded the Count to have advanced these hundred louis! in good truth the Chevalier should then have had the benefit of his fine scheme all to himself, and I would have marched without drum or fife. But courage, Master Urfort, courage; and see whether you cannot conjure good out of evil. In the first place this

ingenious letter-plan may be altogether forestalled, if you can but persuade yourself to rise early enough to be with the girl before the Chevalier despatches his missive to her. Good! — that will be good! And perhaps you may be able to pick up a reward for such rising betimes: if a certain red box, studded with nails, could come under your fingering for a minute or two, the trouble would be amply repaid, and the Count might take it as a receipt in full for his paltry hundred louis. Well, who knows? Heaven may be bountiful, and an opportunity may come:—at all events, should it arrive, be it your care not to be sleeping the while."

It was in pursuance of these reflections that he was awake before daylight, and prepared to seek the maiden at the earliest moment that there appeared a likelihood of her being visible.

But there was no necessity for his waiting for a seemly hour. To Madeline all hours were the same. It was her sudden re-action from sorrow at the supposed death of De Mara, to joy at her learning that he still lived, that made her so absolute with her brother in requiring his aid.

But though this re-action changed the current of her feelings, it in nowise bettered the condition of her mind. On the contrary, it was another earthquake inflicted on the ruin; and the noble edifice of her soul, that so late was rife with beauty, excellence, and virtue, was fast crumbling to decay. Each change of circumstance, whether for good or evil, became more and more irresistible in its effect upon her imagination: her brain swayed beneath the slightest motion, and each moment seemed to threaten it with ultimate destruction. The once-gallant ship floated on the troubled sea little more than a dismal wreck; and it was expectation alone that still held it for a while together: — the expectation of a good, which, even if it came, would hardly restore her to her pristine vigour, was yet sufficient to hold her mind in trembling balance; but the medicine which it afforded, like laudanum to the body, only yielded a present and fleeting good at the expense of a future and certain evil.

It was this expectation that made her wait with what to her seemed patience—the period she had allowed Albert for the consideration of her

proposal. The hours elapsed, but he came not; and she resolved to seek him in his chamber. She went thither, but the place was desolate. Night's dark shades filled the apartment, but no voice of Albert responded to her cry. She sat down upon a corner of the couch; and she felt as if there was something in the thick darkness that enveloped her, that well suited the state of her feelings. De Mara had escaped the search of the police; but was it not possible that he had escaped her also? This was a fearful thought—a thought which, if allowed to grow to perfection, would bring annihilation with it; and with the small relics of strength which were still at her command, she endeavoured to resist its approach: she endeavoured to put in array against it the fact that De Mara was the victor in the field, and that his "charmed life" remained untouched: she brought to her recollection the service she had a right to expect at the hands of Urfort: she tried to persuade herself that there might be some letter or missive from the Count delaying on the road. The slenderness of her reason in this situation might almost be called a mercy to her

mind; for though these conjectures in opposition to the damning thought of his having deserted her were not adequate to remove it, the frailness of her brain's texture mingled the whole together, and saved her from the utter terror of the latter by diluting it, as it were, with the comfortable suggestions of the former.

Meanwhile the hours crept on, and she and darkness were still acquaint. She sought not sleep—she remembered not sleep—sleep offered not to approach her eyelids, and her brain had been too much shaken to court his addresses. Day broke upon her, and still found her sitting in Albert's chamber on the very spot which she had first made her resting-place; and it seemed as though her chief anxiety was the avoidance of aught that might disturb the quiescence of her condition. But though her state was outwardly quiescent, things were not at peace within; they had only consented to a sort of armistice, and at the first attack from without they were again ready to start into action: the lack of slumber had also been at the work of mischief, for though her eyes ached not for the want of repose, her

whole frame was exhaust, and gave way beneath the absence of that sweet refreshment, which at Nature's command revivifies the sensory of man, and which would have been the most healing balm the maiden's disturbed spirit could have received. It was in this condition that the good woman of the house found her. On passing Madeline's own chamber, she perceived that the door was open, and that its occupant was not there. The Orphans had had the art instilled into their bosoms by nature (if such a contradiction in terms may be allowed) of making all who came across their path fall in love with their gentleness of manner and honesty of spirit. The old dame with whom they lived had in an especial degree imbibed the infection; and therefore when she saw that the maiden was not in her apartment, and that the couch presented no signs of having been occupied during the night, she became alarmed, and, as a first resource, hurried to Albert's chamber in the hope of resolving her fears. It was easy to perceive from Madeline's appearance that her usual habits had been infringed; but at the same time her countenance

wore an aspect well calculated to induce those who scanned it to forbear questioning the Orphan on the subject: in spite of the forced serenity that reigned there, a wildness of the eye and a turbulence of feature were perceptible, which made those who gazed thereon shrink from the task of demanding why those characteristics of a fevered mind were so plainly and so painfully legible. The good dame, therefore, by whom in part these sensations were interpreted, contented herself with endeavouring to persuade the maiden to quit the gloomy chamber, where she seemed enwrapted by misery as by a robe, for the purpose of seeking the more cheerful apartment where she had spent so many happy hours. Madeline had had enough of resistance, and felt too severely the pangs that it inflicted, to offer opposition to so unpretending a proposal, though, had she suffered her heart to speak, she might have exclaimed in the words of the man of Uz, "Wherefore is light given to one that is in misery? Why is light given to one whose way is hid?"

But she resisted not. She accepted the guid-

ance of her who persuaded, and followed into the more cheerful apartment. But though she yielded thus far to the good woman's entreaties, it was in vain that the latter attempted to draw her into conversation. A simple "yes," or "no," was the utmost that she could obtain from the maiden, and often in reply to these endeavours, not even so much was afforded by her irreflective mind. She appeared to be involved in dark forebodings of her own; and her companion, at length, in despair at the silence of her manner, withdrew with sorrow for the ineffectiveness of her efforts.

On her descending from Madeline to the floor which was on a level with the street, she found the servant in busy altercation with a pedlar at the door, who, with the voluble pertinacity appertaining to his profession, would receive no denial, but still persisted in being quite sure that there must be some one in the house who would be wanting some article that he could furnish. The servant, in great anger at his unwillingness to take a refusal, was just on the point of shutting the door in his face, when her mistress made her appearance; and the man, gladly availing himself

of the opportunity that presented of another chance for the disposal of some of the contents of his pack, quickly pushed by the servant, and ran through a sort of *catalogue raisonnée* of his wares to the new-comer.

"I have," cried he, with a smirking nod, "every thing and nothing within this little pack;—every thing for my customers, and nothing for those who do not choose to buy. But let me tell you this: only give me a chance of displaying my goods, and the non-buyers will disappear in a twinkling. I have laces more transparent than a new-made spider's web; fans that catch the breeze better than the shaking aspen; true-love knots that can only end with the world; and slippers made after the identical pattern of the one lost by Cinderella at the ball, when she was afraid of her godmother's displeasure. Then I dabble a little in physic, too: I have powder of heart's-ease, for the sorrowful—laughing pills for the melancholy, and a clearing draught for the sad o' conscience. Come, good lady, let me show you some of my wares; or is there no young damsel, whose eyes I could delight for half an hour, whose heart I could quicken,

though the weight of Calvin's monument was upon it?"

The last words caught the attention of her who was listening to him. Her simple fancy was awakened to the idea that such babble and display of finery might effect that which she had in vain attempted, and that Madeline might be drawn from the theme that engaged her thoughts by the promised exhibition. It was with this feeling that she cried, "Come this way, my good man, and perhaps I can find you a customer for some of your wares, especially if you will undertake to describe all their good qualities as fully as you have begun."

The pedlar, nothing loth, obeyed the invitation, and, after a sarcastic hint to the servant never in future to be so sure that she knew the tastes of the whole household, was introduced by his conductor into the apartment where Madeline still remained seated, in the very attitude in which she had been left.

"Come, come, Mademoiselle Schvolen," cried the officious female, "here is something to awaken you. I warrant the good man has beauties enough in his bale to make you forget your sorrow."

Madeline bestowed a sort of unconscious look on the speaker, and mournfully shook her head, without saying a word.

" Come, Mr. Pedlar," continued the old dame, " untie your bundle, that we may see whether your goods deserve the fine names you have given them."

" Confound these plaguy knots !" exclaimed the fellow, in reply ; " this comes of letting others make up your pack. I shall not be able to undo them in a century. The string must be cut, and I have no knife. Perhaps you can lend me a pair of scissors."

" Now, only to think of a pedlar without a knife ! It is like a duck without water. But wait a minute, and I will fetch you what you want." And with these words she went to fulfil her errand.

Ma'm'selle," exclaimed the man, hastily removing his wig and spectacles, which formed a considerable portion of his disguise, " do you not know me ? Do you not know Urfort ?"

" Urfort ! " cried the maiden, with a shriek ; " can it be ? Yes, I know the voice. But what means this dress ?"

" Surely you must have heard that I and my master are sought for by the city guard, in consequence of what took place yesterday ? "

" O, Heavens ! yes ; I know it too well. But tell me—"

" The woman returns. Hush ! I must be the pedlar again till you can find means to get rid of her."

" Here, Mr. Pedlar," said the female as she re-entered the room ; " here are the scissors ; and now to work with them, for I long to see what your promises are good for."

" Good dame," hastily cried Madeline, who was afraid that the fictitious pedlar might have no wares to draw from his seeming pack, " my brother has not yet returned from the summons which he last night received to attend the syndics. I know you love him well enough to share the uneasiness which I feel at his absence. Will you so far prove that love as to seek the reason why he is yet detained ? "

" Is it by command of the syndics that he has been prevented coming home ?" replied the woman. " Alas ! I was afraid that he was again gone on

one of his night's rambles, which have broke my heart enough, though I cared not to say any thing about them."

"But will you not seek him, now that I tell you where he is to be found?

"Ay, marry, that will I; and this instant too, by my troth." And with these words once again the dame left Madeline and the traitor together.

"Now, speak quick, good Urfort," cried the maiden:—"tell me how fares my Lord, the Count."

"He fares as ill as a wounded heart can make him."

"Ill! said you he was ill? But where bides he? O take me with you, that I may alleviate the sorrow that dwells within his breast."

"That I may hardly venture on; for it is at no small risk that I have come hither. And too well I know that the police have their eye on *your* motions to dare to take you back with me."

"Gracious powers!" exclaimed Madeline, "and is he then to be lost to me for ever?"

"It is to prevent that that I have come hither,"

cried the other: "this very day the Count quits his hiding-place, and proceeds on his journey."

"Then where he goes, there will I follow. It is I that have brought him to this hasty flight; it is I that have caused him to be hunted by thief-takers; and the only reparation that I can offer is to soothe his anxiety, and tend his difficulties. Urfort, I will go with him though his journey take him to the very extremity of the globe."

"So much for Altoz and his doubts!" thought Urfort, as he listened to the eager words of his dupe; and he immediately resolved to precipitate her departure from the city, so as to forestall, if possible, the arrival of the Chevalier's cunning missive, which was to perpetrate an object already accomplished.

But even as he was about to urge the necessity of an immediate journey, the undesired communication of the Chevalier was brought to Madeline by one of the servants of the house.

"Is it De Mara's writing?" cried the maiden, almost unconsciously, as she received the letter:—"no, no; for why should he write when his messenger has forerun all other expression of his

sentiments?"—and with these words she was about to throw the packet aside, as something unworthy of her regard.

"Better, and better," thought Urfort; but again his hopes were baffled by the servant observing—"The lad who brought it, Ma'm'selle, said that its contents were of the last importance."

"What can be important," again vaguely exclaimed the Orphan;—"what can be important that concerns not the Count? he is one in all, and all in one to this poor heart." And as she thus expressed the singleness of her thoughts, the seal was carelessly broken, and she glanced at the signature of the Chevalier.

"Altoz!" cried she, with agitation;—"hateful, hateful name! Ill betide the letter he sends! Mischief wait on the miserable creature who owns him for a correspondent! I will have none of him or his." And as she thus gave way to her disgust, she cast the papers, both inclosure and envelope, with indignation from her.

Urfort gave them a sly glance as they lay rejected on the table, and then exclaimed, "Poor Monsieur Altoz! and this after he had been

priding himself that he was a favourite with Ma'm'selle!"

"Does the kid love the hungry jackal?" cried the excited maiden;—"but, good Urfort, enough and too much of this bad man! The Count—whither shall I bend my steps to share his sorrow?"

"His Lordship proposes to direct his course towards the interior of Switzerland, as he thinks that those who are in pursuit of him will be less likely to turn their search thitherward. This will take him through Unwalden."

"Unwalden! There then will I meet De Mara. Place of my earliest joys—of my most peaceful recollections;—abode of happiness, serenity, and smiles. Yes, Unwalden! I will make thee ten-fold and twenty-fold more dear to my heart, by making thee the scene of my re-union with him for whom alone my heart yet holds its pulse."

Scarcely had she concluded this asseveration, when their conference was interrupted by the entrance of Albert. His countenance bore the marks of grief; and his eye, in lieu of its wonted buoyancy, crouched groundwards, as though the

weight of his heart had been imparted to the heart's tell-tale: the fine fresh look of humanity, which had heretofore sat triumphant on his brow, was debased; and it appeared as if this fairy creature of affection and romance had deeply drank his first but too sufficing draught of the world's embittering mixture.

"My sister, my sister!" he exclaimed;—"Oh, let me gaze on you, and revive the honest feelings of my nature, for my eyes have been withered,—my senses appalled, by the disgusting scenes to which I have been submitted."

He paused, as if waiting to be comforted by the well-known voice of his Madeline; and then, the voice not coming to his expectant ear, he cried, "You speak not, sister;—you seem not to heed my sorrows. This long, long night, I have been inmated with thieves,—companioned with criminals, till De Mara's host could be sent for to show that I was the sufferer, not the participator. Sister, will you not speak comfort to your poor Albert, half-distracted with the ordeal he has undergone?"

"De Mara!" cried the unhappy girl, for that

one sound alone had really reached her sense:—"yes; I will speak comfortable things of him."

"Speak not of him," exclaimed Albert, with vehemence;—"let not his name be uttered;—let no sign of him, no hint, no smallest thing that gives token of the existence of such a monster, be made palpable to my aching soul."

"Nay,—nay, Master Albert," said Urfort, now for the first time interfering, as if somewhat fearing the effects the youth's words might produce on the determination of the maiden; "nay, nay, Master Albert, this is mere romance. The Count may have had much provocation for what has so unfortunately come to pass."

Albert, summoned by this voice from the regard which had hitherto been undeviatingly bestowed upon his sister, turned his look towards the last speaker. He gazed;—and by some undefinable chain of associations his whole acquaintance with Urfort flashed on the instant across his brain.

"Ah, ha!" he exclaimed, with fearful energy of manner; "I know you now. Once as I glanced at your fiend-like visage as you stood with hateful smile watching the life-blood as it poured from

hapless Wahrend, the thought darted through my mind that that same look had met my gaze before. Now, now, I remember all! The Lake—the jetty, the pale moon—and the ruffian grasp! Yes, I remember all."

Urfort was cowed by the denouncing accents with which the youth declared his sudden recollection of what had formerly occurred between them; and he could hardly command sufficient presence of mind to mutter something about his entire ignorance of the circumstances to which Albert seemed to be referring. But the excited brother saved him the use of further words; for, scarcely listening to the confused sounds that fell from his lips, he continued—"Silence, thou man of many sins! and do you, my sister, learn to know this human pest. Listen to my words, from which even he, with all his reckless hardihood, shrinks abashed. Gaze on his face, and you will see that it speaks a soul within acquainted with the thousand windings and cajoleries of vice. Oh, Madeline, stand not near that wretch; be not within reach of his grasp; pollution is in his touch,— murder is the demon he serves."

"Oh, no," cried Madeline; "he is my good angel; he comes with my salvation on his lips: he is the leading star that is to conduct me to Unwalden, whither I go to meet De Mara."

"Sacred and inscrutable powers!" exclaimed the brother, "for what further miseries do you reserve the Orphans of Unwalden? She, who should have been the ruler and director for both seems to have lost all strength and guidance even for herself: and I, who have yet the ability to judge the right, am impotent for its execution. Alas, alas, no friend of trust to aid! No sagacious spirit to direct! Oh that our gentle uncle did but know the dangerous peril that hems us round! Oh that the good Madam Lalande had but lived still to tend us with maternal watch!"

As he spoke these words, his eye by some strange chance rested on the packet that Madeline had rejected as unworthy of her notice. The address of the inclosure—

"A Madame
Madame Lalande,
Genève,"

attracted his attention; and with the tone in

which his mind then was the neglected paper seemed to him to be some missive sent in answer to his appeal. Had he perused the accompanying introduction of the Chevalier, the marvel would have ceased, and the charm would not have worked to this superstitious bearing. But his eye rested alone on the sealed epistle that was addressed to her whose memory he had just so pathetically adjured. There was no clue that told him how the letter met his wondering gaze; and it was therefore the more easily interpretable into a mysterious and inexplicable reply to his invocation of the shade of his departed monitor. It was in such a frame of mind as this that he eagerly seized the deceptive paper, and perused its contents. They were cunningly worded, but withal so vaguely, as not to trench too minutely upon particulars. The cunning, however, was hardly needed; for, vague or minute, they were just of a nature to take possession of the whole of Albert's heart. He had found himself opposed to his sister, and he wanted an arbitrator:—he had found himself called upon to fight the battle of prudence against her imprudence, and he wanted a cham-

pion: —he had found the whole weight of a most threatening chain of circumstances thrust upon him, and he felt that he must be crushed beneath the pressure unless one more powerful than himself came to his assistance. It was at this moment — the very crisis of his struggle, — that the treacherous missive of Altoz came within his reach. It was no time to doubt the genuineness of such a communication. The relaxation of Seaton's resolution, and the apology for the letter being penned in a feigned hand, were received as deserving all credence; and when he came to the proposal that the Orphans should immediately proceed to Unwalden, there to meet their long-lost friend, the tidings elicited from his utterance a very scream of delight. The arbitrator was provided,—the champion was forthcoming,—and in Seaton was to be found one whose experience would well be able to bear the load that had nearly overborne the brother's weaker powers of endurance.

Urfort watched the gradual illumination of the youth's countenance as he traced the fictitious lines which the Chevalier had penned, and at length was fain to confess to himself that the pro-

ject of a letter in the uncle's name was a well-timed manœuvre, and calculated to clear his way from the last difficulty which seemed to bode ill to its desired completion.

In the mean while Madeline grew impatient. She had no motive to fill up the interval (like Urfort) with watching the change of expression which was manifested in the face of her brother; and aught that assumed the shape of pause or cession of procedure came to her disturbed fancy like the threatened ruin of her new world of hope.

"Come, Urfort," cried she; "we must depart this instant, or the Count will reach Unwalden before we are on our journey thither."

"Oh, how those names of Urfort and De Mara," exclaimed Albert, "come like a blot on the sweet thoughts that this dear paper has inspired! Look on this letter, sister, and read the words of him——"

"Of whom?—De Mara?"

"No; of one as angel-minded as the Frenchman is black of heart,—of Seaton!"

"I will read no letter," exclaimed Madeline, impatiently; "I know no Seaton; I have but one

duty left, and that is to share the Count's affliction. Come, Urfort, we must away!"

"Still that hateful union of names! To match the combination, hell must be searched,—not earth. Sister, hearken to the words of him who loves you more than life. Avoid this man—this fiend, and I will myself conduct you to Unwalden."

This was the point for which Urfort had waited; and he now spoke in his turn. "It is not worth while to battle with your prejudices, young gentleman," said he; "and as to accompanying Ma'm'selle to Unwalden, that is not in my power, for I have elsewhere to bestow myself; so I give you both good day." And then, as he moved towards the door, he whispered to his victim, "Remember, if you would meet the Count at Unwalden, your journey must be instant." With these words he disappeared.

"Now again I breathe a wholesome air," cried Albert, as he watched his departure; "why was it that I feared to grapple with him, and deliver him to the hands of justice? Twice did the shade of Wahrend seem to call on me to the duty; and twice all my sinews shrank impotent and nerve-

less at the thought of coming in closer contact with one so vile, or again visiting the hateful walls that held me last night imprisoned to confirm his capture."

"Albert, Albert," cried the maiden, "why do we linger here? Ere this we should have bidden a long farewell to Geneva, and be seeking the promised haven of happiness and restoration."

"You say well," replied the brother, glad to be recalled from the painful feelings that at that moment oppressed his bosom:—"we will waste no further time."

Little preparation was necessary to enable them to embark on their journey. Madeline, still engrossed in the one enthrilling idea that she was about to be reunited to De Mara, sat silent till the chaise that was to convey her to her destination was ready; or, if she ever spoke, it was only to complain that the lapse even of a minute was too much for her patience, when such a result was attending on her progress. But with Albert it was very different. A thousand visions of gladness opened upon him; and when he sprang into the carriage, it was with the feelings of a man

who had procured at length the wherewithal by which he was enabled to shake off some frightful impression that had moved as he moved,—paused as he paused,—and was ever overhead, threatening to descend and sink him to annihilation. Had no letter from Seaton arrived, still he must (failing to persuade her stay) have accompanied his sister on her journey—still he must have done his utmost to counteract the fatal influence that seemed to be her be-all. How ten thousand times blessed, then, was he that at this very crisis of his movements, that so precious a missive should reach him to cheer him to his task, and to promise that consummation which was nearest to his heart! At Unwalden he might hope for every thing:—the place was made sacred by their earliest recollections;—it was the spot where their mother had taught them, and where they had felt that obedience to her wishes was their most desired endeavour;—it was the hallowed ground that contained the remains of that mother, and where her spirit might best be supposed to be watching over their actions, and guiding their course. All these were soothing thoughts, that gave goodly

token of success ; and they gathered round the prime recollection that there Seaton was to be recovered, as the ring and satellites of Saturn adorn and aid the brilliancy of that luminary of heaven.

Thus flowed the thoughts of Albert ; or, whenever they lagged in their joy-giving tendency, he would read again and again the letter that had wooed him to so much happiness, and endeavour to find fresh meaning in each sentence—new seeds of delight in each of the few words it contained. It announced no pardon to Madeline ; —it gave no reason for summoning them to Unwalden ;—all was left to future explanation : but still the summons was given,—still the promise of reunion was held out ; and Albert thought that he could trace even in the very signature a token of the good man's remembrance of former days. The paper, after stating that there were motives for adopting a feigned hand, was signed " H. S."—the natural abbreviation of Henry Seaton : yes, even in this, Albert thought he could trace a kindness ; for had the old man still held his offended feelings, the signature

would have been Manvers rather than Seaton,—his real name rather than that by which he had so long been known and endeared to the Orphans of Unwalden. Thus argued Albert; —thus on small foundation built he high expectations. Alas, poor youth! little did he dream that the only reason why the initial was "S." instead of "M." was because the parties, who had concocted the forgery, only knew the elder by the name of Seaton.

With such consoling thoughts implanted in his bosom, well might the Orphan look glad as he felt the swift roll of the carriage under him giving notice of their rapid advance towards his home-village;—well might his heart light up at the recollection of all the charms of Unwalden, long fostered in his memory, but now about to be realised in sooth,—well might he have invoked the spot, whither he was so gladly and so speedily returning, in the words of the gentle poet—

> "Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
> My heart, untravell'd, fondly turns to thee."

Meanwhile Urfort, after pausing awhile on the

stairs that conducted from Madeline's apartment to the street to readjust his disguise, proceeded stealthily, but with rapid pace, towards Kobolt's *auberge* to regain the Count, and give him the signal for commencing his journey to Unwalden, with fair promise of meeting there the deluded maiden.

De Mara, in spite of all the comfortable assurances that had been preached to him by Urfort and the Chevalier, was still the prey of a thousand doubts and misgivings. The death-scene of Wahrend haunted him with a fearful succession of ill-forboding phantoms; and the thought of what might happen, should he fall into the hands of justice before he got clear of the Swiss jurisdiction, would force itself on his mind in spite of his strenuous efforts to think of Madeline, and Madeline only. Nor with respect to her did he feel altogether assured, notwithstanding the confident manner and predictions of Urfort. He knew that he had a determined enemy in her brother, and he knew that that enemy was too well aware of the dishonourable means that had been the cause of so fatally

terminating the previous day's encounter. It was therefore with anxious feelings that he attended the return of Urfort, one moment picturing his continued absence as arising from having been arrested by the police of Geneva, and at another as emanating from the impossibility of obtaining Madeline's consent to proceed to Unwalden.

As soon as Urfort entered the room where the Count was thus pondering over the circumstances that environed him, the latter hastily exclaimed, "The news! the news! and for once let one word speak all."

"One word cannot do it," replied the other; "but one sentence can. Madeline is already on her road towards Unwalden."

De Mara looked at his informant for a moment, as if he were almost incredulous of the possibility of such good tidings being true; and then, as suddenly entering into the belief, he sprang from his seat, and cried, "The chaise! the chaise! quick; we have not an instant to lose."

"Your Lordship forgets that the Chevalier is to provide the chaise; besides which, it is impossible to depart till he finds the means, which in these

unromantic days are absolutely necessary for the safe conduct of any journey."

"That is true!" exclaimed De Mara; "now could I find it in my conscience to excommunicate Altoz for ever from my friendship for this ill-timed delay, when he must know, or ought to know, that a minute to-day, is of more value to me than a year in time to come."

It was not long, however, before the Chevalier reached the hotel where he was so anxiously expected.

"Altoz," cried the Count, as soon as he saw him enter, "I do not know that I shall ever forgive you for wasting these precious moments. But how now, Chevalier?—what has dressed your face in so dark a cloud? you seem to have borrowed my colours of half an hour ago. Cheerily, man; all goes well;—and a few hours gives Madeline to my arms."

"Count de Mara," said he who was thus addressed, very gravely, "the chaise is at the door, and in it you will find the box of which you spoke, and the pistols which you solicited as a loan. Have I performed my promise?"

"Right well, Chevalier!" returned the Count, with an accent of surprise; "but why this question, and why this gravity?"

"Have I not always proved myself your friend?" continued Altoz, without relaxing from his former tone.

"Nay, this is becoming ridiculous!" exclaimed De Mara, with a laugh; "you can answer that question as well as I; so, good Chevalier, I cannot stay any longer to be catechised."

"One word more," cried Altoz, "and I have done. Will it please you to explain how Monsieur Wahrend came by his death?"

The Count started, and turned pale. At length he said, "I thought you told me yesterday that you knew every thing connected with that melancholy circumstance."

"I thought I did," returned the Chevalier "when I had been informed by your host that a duel had taken place between you and the Swiss, and that the fortune of the encounter had been yours. But—but—why should I conceal the fact?—I, as well as the other members of the Knot with whom you were known to be connected, have

been waited on this morning by the chief of police in Geneva, and he has laid before us evidence which, if true, gives a character to the nature of that duel, which yesterday I should have denounced as most false and impossible."

"And why not so to-day?"

"Facts that seem to bear truth on the face of them have been submitted to us: the bloody footstool partly broken as if by the weight of some heavy body falling on it, and some of the expressions of the dying man that were overheard by one of the garçons of the hotel, appear to give confirmation to the decisive testimony of Albert. Neither can I forget that your own conduct towards me last night was somewhat enigmatical, though till this evidence was detailed, I knew not how to guess at its meaning. Let one word tell all. I have executed your commission, because my word was passed to do so; but my more important business here is to demand in the name of our friends, from whom I come deputed, an explanation of this affair."

"Altoz, Altoz, is this your friendship for me?" cried the Count; "and at a moment when you

knew that I must instantly depart for Unwalden or lose Madeline for ever. Perhaps, even these few minutes snatch her from my arms."

"I think, Count," returned the Chevalier, "that the want of friendship arose with you rather than with me. Let this matter be explained, and I am still your friend. I have already shown it this morning, for when it was understood that the motive of the police in making the Knot acquainted with what had happened was in the hopes that they might assist in your arrest, a proposal for giving you up was seriously entertained; and I believe I may say, that it was owing to my interference that it was rejected till you should have had full opportunity to explain."

"I thank you for your kindness," said the Count, in a melancholy tone;—"but why say you that it was I that broke the bond of friendship between us?"

"Can you ask that, when you remember that you suffered me to go away last night undeceived? for you must well have imagined that when you were implicated in such an affair, I should not long remain unmolested by the police.

But I had determined not to speak of my own private feelings; suffice it to say, that I am here as the representative of the Knot, and in their name I demand an explanation."

"And by what right does the Knot make this demand?"

"This question from you, Count de Mara!" replied Altoz;—"have you indeed forgotten that the bond that has drawn us together is that of honour? Do you not remember the way in which you yourself so strenuously opposed the admission of the Marquis of Cavella, because it was whispered that he had shrunk from a challenge in Padua; and when it was urged upon you by his proposer that it was too much to try a man on mere rumour, your answer was, that even the breath of a whisper of dishonour was enough to require his rejection? These things must be fresh in your memory; and it is these things which entitle the Knot to demand an explanation of this affair."

"They shall have it then," cried De Mara; "but on one condition—that you, as their representative, will meet me at Unwalden for that

purpose. I think this is not too much to require at your hands, as you are well aware how peremptorily my departure is demanded."

"Your condition shall be agreed to," replied Altoz: "the Knot have left this affair to my absolute disposal; and I pledge myself to be at Unwalden as soon as possible after you, for the final settlement of it. Till then, farewell. Let me however add, by way of advice, that you will do well to be cautious. From the observations of the chief of police, there can be little doubt that every exertion will be made to procure your arrest."

"I am obliged for your caution," said the Count, somewhat stiffly: "till we meet at Unwalden, farewell."

The Chevalier then took his departure to return to the city; and in another minute De Mara and Urfort were in pursuit of the Orphans.

CHAPTER VIII.

Beatr. Why 'tis impossible thou canst be so wicked,
Or shelter such a cunning cruelty ;
To make his death the murderer of my honour!
Thy language is so bold and vicious,
I cannot see which way I can forgive it
With any modesty.
Deflores. Pish! you forget yourself.
A woman dipt in blood, and talk of modesty!

MIDDLETON AND ROWLEY'S CHANGELING.

AN opportunity has already been taken in the preceding chapter to describe the feelings of joy with which Albert undertook to conduct his sister to Unwalden, whither he went in the full expectation of meeting Seaton. But before the carriage reached its place of destination, some

portion of his gladness of heart had evaporated. Since the commencement of Madeline's unsuspected disease (which was hourly becoming stronger and stronger, and more decisively marked each minute in the agitation of her manner, and the wildness of her language) Albert for the first time found himself in uninterrupted tête-à-tête with the afflicted one. On previous occasions one intruder or another had interfered, and he had never been alone with her sufficiently long for him to scan carefully the meaning of those changes which were but too visible. It was not so in this instance however. The carriage rolled steadily onwards towards the goal which both its inmates were so desirous of attaining, and no external object presented itself to distract the attention of Albert from his sister, or to interrupt that flow of thought which for the last few days had had such omnipotent possession of her imagination.

But though the prospect of a reunion with De Mara ought to have been nearly certified to the expectation of the maiden, it was on this very point that she displayed that fickleness of con-

clusion, which is so peculiarly characteristic of those who are labouring under a disturbed intellect, and whose inconsecutiveness of apprehension is at once the consequence and the indication of "the mind diseased." For a while her heart was overflowing with joy at the thought that she had insured her grand design of being reunited to the Count. But suddenly another idea forced itself into her imagination. The recollection of Albert's unwillingness to assist her in such an object,—of his aversion to the nobleman,—of his unremitting attempts to persuade her to abandon the fugitive,—all came at once upon her mind, and furnished her with the thought that her brother had only inveigled her into the chaise upon the promise of conducting her to Unwalden, while in fact the direction in which they were proceeding was far contrary to the realisation of that promise.

"Albert," cried she, wildly, as the thought gained admission to her brain, "whither are we journeying? What road is this along which the horses pace so rapidly? And why do your eyes glisten, as each moment bears us further and further on our travel?"

The youth gazed at her who thus questioned with wonder; and there was a pause before he replied—"If one question may answer another, let me rather ask why these inquiries?"

"Ah, do you equivocate!" cried she:—"nay, then, I read it all. Stop the chaise!—Quick, quick;—this instant call to the driver to turn his horses' heads; or I will spring from the carriage, and show you how well I understand your meaning."

"Gracious Heaven! my sister," exclaimed the affrighted youth, "what does this portend? Are we not on the road to Unwalden, and will not a few short hours bring us to the cherished spot, where happiness was ours for so many years, and will be so again, under the kindly care of our returning uncle?"

"This is not the road to Unwalden," cried Madeline; "I remember no part of these woods, these rocks, or these tracks. You are conducting me by some strange and unknown route away from him who in himself is all the world to me."

"Nay, sister; now I see that you are doing this only to grieve my heart, and make heavy this

journey, which should be all lightness and rejoicing. Look at yon running stream, that dashes in harmless fury against the antique bridge that crosses it, and then subsides into a smooth and unruffled surface, giving bright reflection of tree that waves, and cloud that floats above. Do you not remember passing here on our way to Geneva? Do you not remember saying, as you cast a melancholy look upon this self-same prospect, 'Oh that my uncle could gaze upon my heart as I do upon this stream, and behold how truly the rude gushing of my passions has subsided into calmness and sobriety, reflecting nought but the recollection of his kindness and fostering care!'"

"Did I say so?" faintly ejaculated the poor half-witted maiden: "and is this, indeed, the road to Unwalden?" added she, as she remembered something of what Albert had narrated.

"You are naught, Madeline," replied the brother, "to ask such a question:—do you not remember yon high cliff that climbs and climbs with many craggy stages towards the sky, as though it would thrust its uttermost head into the very bosom of the firmament? It was on that

rock you wished to stand, endowed with an omniscient eye, that you might penetrate from its commanding summit into the heart of each region of the globe, and so trace where it was that the good Seaton was concealing himself from our longing search."

"And when shall we reach Unwalden, if this indeed be true?"

"Soon, very soon, dear Madeline! But, oh! how tenfold sooner in appearance, would my sister but dismiss these strange and inexplicable fancies, and let her thoughts flow in the same sweet spirit as when we last journeyed on this road! Then my ears heard you not; and in what I have related, I have rather given your purport than your words, explained to me in such signs as might best instruct my defective sense. But now when I have perfect organs, and your gentle voice would be as music to me, you speak not, or speak only to harass and perplex."

"Alas! dear Albert, I can speak only of one thing," murmured the maiden:—"but is it, indeed, Unwalden that we approach?" And then, as if unconscious that she had asked the question,

she put her head out of the window of the chaise without waiting for reply, and appeared to be carefully studying each object that the varying road presented, as if she would again and again assure herself that she was not being deceived, or unwittingly made the victim of treachery.

But though now silent, she had said enough to alarm the mind of Albert, and awaken it from that state of tranquil hope which the expectation of meeting Seaton at Unwalden had conferred upon it. The strange manner in which his sister had questioned the honesty of his intentions, and the want of controul that appeared to predominate over every word and action that escaped her, launched the youth into a sea of doubt and conjecture, the current of which bore him far away from the real solution of the mystery. In vain he taxed his imagination to discover what Madeline's waywardness of language might portend;—in vain he sought to persuade himself that he still had power to direct her course aright. He could not bring his mind to these conclusions; for though true it was that for a while her wild suspicions seemed to be lulled, the recollection of their out-

pouring was still unaccounted for, and reminded him that again they might burst forth equally unexpectedly, and baffle his best endeavours to quell their overwhelming spirit.

The consideration of these difficulties recalled to his mind the means of discovery which were within his possession; and each time that this power of solution presented itself to his imagination, the more entirely conviction came upon him that this was the only method by which he could hope to ascertain the real purport of those impulses which were swaying his sister's conduct.

The enforced recurrence of this remedy to his mind was productive of one advantage. The time had been when he could not contemplate for a moment the possibility of putting his dear-prized theory into practice without a sort of involuntary shrinking from the task, as if it was prompting him to something like the pollution of all that he held most choice and sacred. It was the strength of this sensation that led him to resist so vigorously the proposal of Madeline that the first effect of his discovery should be tried on De Mara. To have devoted the mysterious boon to such a

purpose was frightful to his imagination; but when the incoherent manner of his sister, on receipt of the news of Wahrend's death, had urged him to employ this precious engine of elucidation, the pain with which he contemplated the effort was materially diminished; and though it might be that the summons of the officer to attend the syndics appeared even at that period as a sort of relief to his feelings, yet the resolution which he had then taken to work the Soul's Transfusion between Madeline and himself had served to pave the way to his more willingly coming to the same determination on the present occasion, and had enabled him to look upon this practical exhibition of what might be called the mistress of his soul, without the accompaniment of those repulsive sensations which might have unfitted him for the labour.

Each mile that the carriage rolled on towards its place of destination—each moment that he sat in fearful expectation that Madeline might again burst forth in the same strain of suspicious unkindness that had characterised her late ejaculations—confirmed him the more resolutely in his

purpose; and by the time that he first caught a glimpse of the well-known village rising in the distant landscape, his determination was firm and strong to effect the great change of souls as soon as they should have reached their long-abandoned home.

The chaise stopped at the door of the Single Cottage; and as an old woman was in possession of it for the purpose of keeping it in order, the reinstatement of the Orphans in their whilome peaceful dwelling was a matter of easy accomplishment. But though thus far the arrangement was complete, the minds of both the travellers were in a state of painful suspense. Madeline looked for the arrival of De Mara with impatience heaped on impatience, as the poets of old feigned mountain heaped on mountain; and Albert heard with astonishment from the old guardian of the cottage that Seaton had given no token of his being at Unwalden or in its neighbourhood.

This unaccountable absence of their uncle might have been an additional motive for Albert's immediately undertaking the task he had prescribed to himself; but the condition of Madeline, on finding

that De Mara was equally as unheard-of as Seaton, once again made him shrink. Having dismissed the old woman to the village-inn, there to inquire whether any intelligence concerning Seaton could be ascertained, the youth sought to appease the disturbed emotions of his sister. He endeavoured to distract her thoughts from their one-engrossing theme, by bringing to her recollection those associations with which his own heart teemed when he remembered where he was. But in vain!—Still in vain!—The Single Cottage seemed to awake in her no more sympathy than the hut that an eremite might have built in the wilds of Caucasus. The reminiscences, which Albert would have roused, of their earlier days, fell upon her ear dull and unprofitable as the solemn bell on that of the corpse whose interment it announces. Even the name of her mother—that name which once would have drawn floods of earnest tears from the very well-spring of her heart, produced no effect on the wretched ruin of mind that still occupied her frame.

"I will go to the grave of our mother," cried Albert; "and will not my sister go with me?

Shall not both the Orphans unite their tears on the spot that is hallowed for ever in their hearts? Come, dearest! Of old it was matter of reproach, if either went to that sanctuary of our affections without the other. Let us not after so long an absence be separate mourners at her tomb."

As the youth spoke, he watched the maiden with intense earnestness; and once he thought he traced the approach of a tear to the very brink of her eyelids;—once he thought he saw the bright drop tremble on the extreme edge, as if ready to do homage to the memory of her he had invoked. But, no!—no tears came forth from nature's fount:—the eye again assumed its fixedness of look,—the cheek was still blanched, unwatered by the refreshing moisture of aroused affection; and, in answer to his appeal, the forlorn one did but shake her head in mournful intimation that not even this last conjuration had power to bring back the lost apprehensions of her mind.

"O God! O God!" exclaimed the agonised youth; "and cannot even the sacred name of mother change this frightful picture? Rouse thee, then, Albert!—rouse thee to thy task; and, ere it

be too late, solve this inexplicable riddle. And yet, a little minute! my sister refuses my holy invitation to the tomb of our parent. Double then,—twice double,—yes, twice tenfold is the duty mine to kneel on the turf that shrouds those sacred remains. All things on the face of earth shall give way to that first of charges. How dare I think of doing one simple act till that summons from the grave is obeyed! Yes, my mother, I come, I come!—and be it yours to hover near me, when I return to accomplish the only deed that gives prospect of the restoration of your children's happiness."

Almost unconsciously he uttered these words, and before they were concluded he had quitted the cottage, and was rapidly passing towards the spot where the remains of the hapless Agnes were interred. Jealous of observation, and little desirous, while engaged in this pious errand, of meeting the gaze of the loiterers of the hamlet, he crept with stealthy pace and by unfrequented paths to the churchyard of the village:—each step, as it bore him nearer and nearer to that place of rest eternal, served to attune his mind to the object

that commanded his motions, and to allay the more corrosive sensations that his sister's conduct had inflicted on his heart. At length the churchyard was gained :—all around seemed silent, and consecrate to solitude, and her companion—melancholy ; and Albert with quick but trembling pace glided to the well-known corner where a green mound and pure white slab marked his mother's resting-place. Full of present love, replete with honest affection, with heart high-beating, with pulse swift-flowing, with tears quick-chasing down his burning cheeks, he reached the grave ; but all this full course of his soul's best sentiments was checked on beholding, to his utter astonishment, a human form usurping that place which he held to be sacredly his own, and kneeling by the side of the humble mausoleum.

The youth paused irresolute, but not before the echo of his approaching footfall had reached the kneeler's ear. He looked up—hesitated, as if in doubt for a moment ; and then " Albert, dearest Albert !" broke upon the hearing of the Orphan, whose voice almost in a shriek responded, " Uncle !—Seaton !—Oh, my God, I thank thee for this !" and at the same minute the two were

kneeling where they had often knelt before, fast locked in each other's embrace, and silently invoking her, who had brought them thither, to be witness of their rapture.

"Dearest, dearest Albert," at length cried Seaton, "how comes this happiness? Why at Unwalden?—But, alas! I forget; you cannot hear my words, and ——"

"Cannot I hear your words?" replied Albert, with a melancholy smile: "methinks, though I never heard that dear voice before, I should have known it amid a Babel of sounds, for it comes soft and gentle on my ear, as I ever accented it in my mind's fancy."

"And do you, indeed, hear me speak? What joy! What delight! But let explanation pause awhile, for I have a thousand other questions to ask. Where is Madeline?"

"Where should she be, dear uncle, but at the Single Cottage?"

"That is strange! I stopped at the village-inn but ten minutes since, and they told me that you had quitted Unwalden the morning after my departure, and had not since returned."

"True! true!" cried Albert; "our arrival is

hardly older than your own: but we got your letter directed to Madame Lalande, at Geneva, and could we for a moment hesitate?"

"What letter? Madame Lalande is not at Geneva."

"Alas! no;" returned Albert, with a sigh; "unless it may be said that our poor mother is at Unwalden. Poor lady! she died most suddenly."

"Died suddenly! and at Geneva! These are strange mysteries. It is only five days since that I quitted Madame Lalande at Genoa."

"Gracious Heaven! my uncle," exclaimed the youth; "full a month ago, Count de Mara told us that she was dead. Nay, she must have been, for we heard of some examination before the syndics on account of her sudden decease."

"You have been fearfully deceived, my Albert. God grant that I may yet be in time to avert the mischief which such falsehood must have been intended to cover! Who is this Count De Mara?"

"Oh, mention him not; he is a fiend—a monster—the murderer of the good and gentle Wahrend, who fell beneath his hand."

"Wahrend dead!" cried the old man, with

tears ; " when will this scene of horror terminate ? But his destroyer—what of him ? "

" He either is at Unwalden, or will be here anon."

" Why do the officers of justice bring him here ?"

" He brings himself, alas ! He is not yet arrested, having, in spite of all diligence, escaped their search."

" How is this ?" demanded Seaton ; " you know his intentions ; you know that he is the murderer of Wahrend,—and yet you tell me that he is at liberty. Why do you not have him seized ?"

" Madeline ! Madeline !" exclaimed Albert, almost frantic at the question.

" Ah, I see it now. Is she with this De Mara ? But, no ; you told me a minute since that she was at the Single Cottage. Where will this man stay when he arrives at Unwalden ?"

" At the village-inn, most likely."

" At the inn !" cried Seaton ; " why, now I remember, just as I quitted it to come hither, a carriage drove up with the blinds so closely drawn, that I could but just discern that it contained two travellers."

"It must have been the Count, and that villain Urfort," exclaimed Albert.

"Who is Urfort?"

"The abettor of the other in the murder of Wahrend—his creature for all wickedness!"

"Time, then, is precious: we must away, and inform the magistrate of the place who these strangers are. When he hears of the death of Wahrend by their hand, he will be prompt to act; the whole village will be in arms, for right well was the kind Swiss beloved by them."

With these words they quitted the churchyard. For a minute both seemed wrapped in thought, as they paced rapidly onward side by side.

At length Seaton exclaimed, "O Albert, Albert! What a meeting is this! I expected sorrow on my return, but not such sorrow as this."

"You have not yet explained the motive of that return," cried the youth.

"A word must do it now, till a more time-serving opportunity occurs. Often and often did I reproach myself for having left you, but could not strain my courage to the pitch of returning,

till, entirely by accident, I met Madame Lalande at Genoa five days ago. She told me that she had neither seen nor heard any thing of you while residing at Geneva, but that she had been detained at Genoa for some months by a long fit of illness, from which she was even then but barely recovered. This intelligence struck heavy on my heart; for one of the consolations with which I had continually fostered my sickly fancy was, that in my absence you would apply to that lady, and that she would occupy my place in your affections and conduct. Indeed, it was the assurance of that which prevented my making known to her the course that I was pursuing, lest it should be the means of enabling you to discover whither I had retreated."

"It was the information, then, or rather the non-information, that you received from Madame Lalande, that brought you back to Unwalden?"

"I think that would have been sufficient of itself to have accomplished my return; but Madame Lalande added a piece of news which resolved me on the instant to set out for Unwalden. By a most extraordinary chance, which time will not now

allow me to explain, she had come to the certain knowledge that your father—that Warner, whom we had so long supposed dead, was still alive, and that he had, beyond all doubt, been at Geneva very lately, though, whether accident had taken him thither, or a suspicion of the direction in which Agnes had retreated, could not be ascertained."

"Then we are not orphans!" cried Albert.

"Alas, that you were!" replied the other; "I cannot describe to you the horror with which I contemplated the possibility of your being encountered by that fiend in human shape;—excuse the appellation, dear Albert; but did you know as much of that man's life as I do, you would be compelled to admit that my designation of him is too painfully true. Thank God, the pang of his having discovered his deserted children is at least spared me."

"But how extraordinary that, without premeditation, both you and we should have returned to Unwalden at the same moment!"

"Let it inspire us with the hope that all may yet be well. The letter of which you have spoken is evidently a wicked fabrication of De Mara, and

thus in his cunning is he foiled ; for by bringing you here he has brought you to my care,—when I, by my coming, only thought of protecting you against a man with whom you have not met. De Mara we shall be able to overthrow ; but I confess, had I had to encounter Warner, the task would have been dreadful—perhaps too much for my strength. On receiving Madame Lalande's intelligence, I thought that I could dare any thing ; and on the spur of the feeling, I set out for Unwalden with the vow that, should he be here, I would confront him, and bid him shrink with horror at the sight of the injured Manvers. But during my journey I have had time to recollect his hardened brutality—his impenetrable nature, and to confess to myself that such an appeal would have been made in vain. The name of Manvers would no more have abashed him, than any other of the hundred victims whom the course of an ill-spent life has crushed beneath his feet."

"Oh, uncle, uncle!" cried Albert, "spare these words,—spare these looks ; and do not call yourself Manvers,—to us you have ever been Seaton. It is the name we love ; and though your farewell

letter told us it was a fiction, we have ever felt that to our hearts it came as your best appellation, for it is associated with all your care and kindness of us."

"Heaven grant, my Albert, that my care and kindness may be able to fulfil your happy destiny!—But we are now at the division of the roads. Do you take that which leads to the inn, and ascertain whether the new comers be really De Mara and his companion; while I go to the Single Cottage to secure Madeline against the intrusion of this bad man."

With these words they parted,—each to his separate destination.

Albert's conjecture with respect to the occupants of the chaise that had stopped at the village-inn, was not ill-founded. Scarcely had Manvers, as we must now call him, quitted the threshold of the *auberge*, when forth stepped De Mara and Urfort, and as speedily as the matter could be arranged, they took possession of such apartments as the place afforded. The Count had had a restless journey, and his follower, though he cared little for the evident discomposure of his patron's

manner, plainly perceived that a crisis was on the eve of arrival, and that the affair of Madeline must run in direct unison with De Mara's present temper, or farewell to all hopes of obtaining the promised reward, the expectation of which alone detained him in attendance on the Frenchman.

It was with this feeling that he was the first to exclaim, as soon as they found themselves alone in the apartment allotted to them, "We must be stirring, my Lord, and be with the girl before she has an opportunity of seeing any of her old village-cronies."

"Urfort," cried the Count, "my heart misgives me, and I feel as if I were even now standing on the brink of life and death. I am here in the very midst of my enemies ;—it was from this village Wahrend came,—how am I to answer his relations, should they discover me? It is here that I have appointed to explain to Altoz that which cannot be explained ;—how am I to reply to the demands my associates require at my hands?"

"Cheerly, cheerly, my patron," replied Urfort, who had been partly prepared for this explosion ;—"one half hour, and the girl shall be won!—mind,

I pledge myself to that. The thick-headed Switzers will indeed be clever, if within that space of time they can find you here. And as to Altoz and his precious notions of honour, if you will take my advice, you will be beforehand with him and his constituents; and instead of waiting for them to cast you off, do you cast them off, and bid them go hang in their wisdom."

"Alas! they have ever been my friends."

"But are so no longer," returned Urfort, "after this errand of the Chevalier. If your Lordship remembered as much of Will Shakspeare as I do, (and, God wot, I have not read a play of his for this many a year,) you would exclaim in the words of Timon—

'You Knot of mouth-friends,—smoke and luke-warm water
Is your perfection.'

But we have more pressing business. Do you intend to give up Madeline?"

"It would go near to break my heart to do so, after all the risk and peril she has cost me. But of all places in the world this was the worst chosen. I am full on the enemy's quarters."

"You may thank Altoz for the choice of the place," cried Urfort.

"Do not speak his name;—the remembrance of him sickens me to the death. O De Mara! De Mara! how wretched is your estate become, when you fear to meet him who was so lately your sworn and bosom friend! Urfort, I will stay here no longer;—each sound that I hear pictures to me the approach of—— no matter whom, for all mankind has execration for me. I will fly this instant."

"And without the girl? for shame, for shame, when half an hour gives her to your arms!"

"Your promises," cried De Mara, "have lost their impress on me. You have led me on too long. Unwalden is my dungeon, and I will stay no longer in it."

"Nay, nay, my noble patron," exclaimed the other, each moment becoming more fearful of the fate of his hundred louis; "never before was Madeline so completely within our grasp: give me one little half hour, and I pledge myself to bring her to your Lordship."

The Count shook his head.

"Nay, only one half hour;—the risk is nothing; the experiment worth a world. Think of her glorious charms;—call to your recollection her thousand beauties;—and all for one half hour's sacrifice."

"I will stay the time," cried the nobleman, wakened by Urfort's words to the memory of all the joys with which he had so long fed himself; "but remember,—only one half hour! if you exceed that time, or then return without her, no power on earth shall detain me."

"I accept the terms," answered Urfort, "and in half an hour I bring you Madeline as the companion of your further flight. Are you sure that you have money enough to continue your journey beyond the means of pursuit?—of course I mean after my hundred louis shall have been paid, for I need not remind your Lordship on her appearance here they will be earned."

"Look on this box," replied the Count, opening it;—"see, it is well nigh full of gold."

"Ah! ha!" exclaimed the other; "were that mine, I would bid defiance to all the thief-takers and all the Chevaliers that ever breathed."

"But we waste time," cried De Mara.'

"I will but put this precious load and your pistols safe in the back room, lest during my absence the host might enter, and the sight should frighten him from his landlordly propriety,—and then away to the Single Cottage, where no doubt Madeline is safe arrived ere this."

"Put the box in the closet near the window," said the Count; "but leave the pistols in this room, for I have not yet loaded them; and though half an hour (if you keep your promise) will soon be over, I must at all events be prepared for the worst, for never shall officer of justice put hand upon De Mara."

The box was soon disposed of as the nobleman had directed; and then Urfort, with another word of assurance to his employer, departed with rapid pace for the cottage, where Madeline, left alone by her brother's visit to the grave of their mother, was ruminating in wild and incoherent method.

The road to the Single Cottage was easily found, and he hastened thither, giving the few minutes, that the distance occupied, to the consi-

deration of the manner in which he was to meet the victim of his unlawful design. He felt no difficulty as to the state of Madeline's heart; but still as events had turned out, he could not but perceive that it might require great ingenuity to bring her to the terms, which, under the pressure of time and circumstances, would afford the completion that was demanded by the Count. De Mara, it was evident, was on the brink of taking the alarm, and the least further delay would be the signal of his abandoning the pursuit, in which case the promised gratuity would disappear at the same time as the Count. The only method that Urfort could suggest to his mind for the prevention of this, was the taking Madeline by storm, and so to play upon her fears and passions as to make her yield to the suit of De Mara. The office was a dangerous one, and not such as Urfort would willingly have undertaken. But what other could be adopted? A bare half-hour would witness De Mara's flight; and therefore, unless the maiden could be pressed into surrendering at once, all was lost. The only point that promised any thing in his favour was the condition of Made-

line's mind. The entireness of her affection for the nobleman was beyond doubt; but Urfort had also discerned something of the intellectual secession of power that had been gradually taking place, and it was on that perception that he chiefly built his plan of attack; for he thought that if with her dread of losing the Count, he could so intermingle her share in the late distressful scenes that had occurred, the union of the two might so confuse her understanding as to leave her at the mercy of her pursuers.

Armed with these resolutions, he reached the Single Cottage, and speedily obtained ingress. His presence seemed to have a charmed effect upon the maiden. Her countenance brightened as he entered, and she started from her seat to receive him.

"Are you indeed come at last, good Urfort?" she cried: "oh, what a dreary while it has appeared! But De Mara—where is he? Why comes he not with you?"

"He could not come," replied the other impressively.

"Could not come! Oh, Urfort! what means

that 'could not?'—Is he well? Where tarries he?"

"He lies hid like a guilty thing, lest those who seek for him should find their prey."

"But they shall not find him. Who is there here to betray him? Oh, take me to him, and together we will fly to the world's end, rather than harm shall reach him."

"But will you promise to console him in his sorrows? Will you be his in grief and joy?"

"Am I not his?" exclaimed the maiden:—"what has brought me to Unwalden but love for him? What is it that has raised such strange convulsion here, but the share I take in him and his?" And as she spoke she pressed her hand convulsively to her burning forehead.

"You will not understand me, Madeline," cried the fiend:—"will you prove that you are his by womanly yielding? Will you hang fondly round his neck, and return pressure for pressure,—kiss for kiss? Will you forget the old-woman maxims of a croaking world, and be his in all that woman can be man's?"

"I will be his wife," softly murmured Madeline.

This was a reply for which even Urfort was not prepared: but the moments were precious; and if some answer was not given, all opportunity would be lost. Now, thought he, invention stands my friend!

"Madeline," he replied, with well-affected solemnity, "that cannot be. Start not—tremble not—De Mara is already married."

The poor creature shrieked as he uttered the words, and would have fallen, but that his ready arm supported her to a sort of ottoman that filled the window-seat.

"Air! Give me air, for God's sake!" she exclaimed: "take this bandage from my throat, that seems as if it were grappling me to destruction.—But you said not married, good Urfort?"

"The word is true," cried he; "but what then? Years since he was separated from his wife, and you shall take her place in all but the miserable form that silly laws require."

"Never! never!" said the maiden, distraught; "I think the wicked news has given me strength. Where is my brother? Stay for me, Albert. Now, NOW! I can go with you to our mother's grave."

"Nay, nay!" cried Urfort, with a laugh; "the

only grave for you is De Mara's arms. Come, he is near at hand ; I will take you to him."

" Oh, if mercy has any portion in your frame, let me not see him. Married! Yes, that was the word that sounded like the overwhelming trumpet of earth's last day ! And yet you would take me to De Mara ! Oh, rather take me from myself, and give me annihilation, in exchange for the thousand horrors that rack my brain."

" You talk vainly, fair maiden," replied her tormentor ; " De Mara's you must be, and his alone. What is it you have brought upon him ? The slaughter of the Swiss—an ignominious flight—and the hue and cry of the basest of the human race. For all this mischief he has only you as a reward : in that at least he must not be foiled."

" Powers of mercy ! " cried the afflicted one, " what is it you say ? I think you be a monster, though you wear the semblance of a man."

" It is you that trench on humanity," answered Urfort with a horrid laugh, " in showing such ingratitude, when I am labouring for your love. But this is child's play. Remember Wahrend and his bloody death ! Think you it was De Mara

that killed him ?—No, it was you :—you plunged the glittering weapon in his heart, for it was you that sounded the trumpet to the onslaught."

" Oh miserable, wretched Madeline ! "

" It was at your command," continued Urfort, in his dreadful summary—" it was at your command that the Count entered on the deadly strife. Not on his head, then, but on yours is the blood of Wahrend. Deep, deep are you imbued in the crime ; and yet now you claim the right to stand upon your woman's modesty, as though you were pure as the unsinning babe. It is now that you shrink from your companion—now you desert him in his hour of trial."

" Mercy !" cried Madeline, " mercy ! "

" What ! was the noble Count to fight your battles ?—was he to bare his bosom to the Switzer's angry blade ?—and is he now to be cheated of his booty ? Pretty young lady, you must be taught justice, if you know it not. But we dally with time. De Mara waits, and you must to him."

" Not a thousand winged steeds should drag me to him !"

" Perhaps so," cried Urfort, with another of his

howling laughs—" perhaps so, for we deal not in hippogriffs; but at least we will see how much one strong man is able to do towards it.—Come, pretty maiden, this way to the Count and the joys of love." And, as he spoke, he wound his athletic arms around her form, and bore her onwards towards the door of the cottage, while the helpless sufferer shrieked with piteous note, uttering such plaintive words as would have wooed the heart of aught save such a fiend to mercy.

But, even as the monster reached the door with his helpless burthen, it opened from without, and the Senior, who had hurried forward on hearing the sounds of lamentation, stood before them. For a single moment there was a fear-striking pause, while the two men glared at one another with strange and portentous expression; and then with simultaneous burst," Manvers!" — " Warner!" escaped from either's lips.

Yes, it was too true. The demon, that for weeks had been plotting Madeline's destruction,—the wretch beyond all wretches, that at that instant was bearing her to the polluting arms of De Mara, was no other than HER FATHER!

"Most disgusting of fiends!" exclaimed Manvers, who in a moment interpreted the meaning of the scene; "do we again meet,—and at such an epoch? Tremble, villain;—shrink into nothingness;—or pray the earth in her bounty to rend her bosom and engross you, ere I tell you the hapless creature you yet hold in your sinful arms is your daughter—the offspring of the broken-hearted Agnes."

Warner did tremble at the words:—he tottered from his standing, and Madeline would have fallen but for the seat that was at hand toreceive her.

"Is she indeed my daughter?" groaned the man, as if for the instant stricken with the enormity of his guilt.

"Thy most unhappy daughter," answered Manvers, "as surely as thou art the hateful Urfort that hast been working for her utter undoing. But justice,—quick-footed justice is upon you. The police is roused;—thy crimes are known;—and here, in the face of Heaven, I seize upon thee to answer thy long course of sin."

As he spoke, he grappled with the appalled

Felon. For a moment it seemed as if the animal strength of the latter was so cowed by the guilt that was lodged within, that he could not struggle against the grasp even of one so feeble as the care-worn Manvers. But the pristine callousness of his soul was speedily on its return, and as it gained upon him, it appeared to reinstate his nerves and fibres in their ancient vigour. He in his turn seized Manvers. The contest was but momentary. The iron frame and compact limbs of Warner found no match in the attenuated powers of his opponent, and one gigantic effort on his part was sufficient to hurl the unnerved Senior to the ground.

"Lie there, old dotard!" exclaimed the conqueror, "and believe you owe your life to the presence of ——psha! What care I for daughter or relationship? But for one piece of information still I thank you. If the police be indeed roused, it is time for Warner to take care of himself: and so, farewell for ever, tottering old man; nor seek again to confront one who may not next time be disposed to treat a gripe of the neck so leniently."

Swiftly he quitted the cottage. The wretched

Manvers for a moment hesitated what course to pursue. He knew not how to leave Madeline, who, since her release from the grasp of Warner, had continued lying motionless, and apparently senseless, on the ottoman; and yet it swelled his heart with indignation to think that the monster might escape, if not instantly pursued.

At this moment Albert entered.

"Saw you not Warner?" cried the Senior.

"Warner!" exclaimed the youth: "I saw Urfort this moment. He fled past me towards the village like a greyhound."

"Towards the village?—Good!—Look to your sister, dear Albert, till I return; or meet me anon at the inn, if I overstay her impatience." And without further explanation he followed in the track which Albert pointed out as that of the fugitive.

CHAPTER IX.

It takes it in itself, and, cunningly
Changing itself, the object soon perceives;
For straight itself in self-same shape adorning
Becomes the same with quick and strange transforming.

P. Fletcher.

The rapid disappearance of his uncle left Albert in a maze of bewilderment. That which was already dark and obscure grew more and more confused to his comprehension, and he found himself in the midst of the most threatening uncertainty. What course to pursue—what steps to take, he knew not. He would have pursued Manvers, but his words "Look to your sister" still chained him to the spot on which he stood.

"Tell me, dear Madeline," said he, as these words recurred to his memory, "what means this strange departure of our uncle ?"

But Madeline spoke not ; and when he gazed upon her, it seemed to him as if she had sunk in slumber on the ottoman which had befriended her, when released from the rude grasp of Warner. She appeared to Albert's mind, uninformed of the last half-hour's events, to sleep ; but still he could trace that in her countenance which bore similitude to the expression which so often of late had startled him, and which had made him anxious, yet fearful, to ascertain the spring whence emanated such bitter waters.

As he looked upon her couchant form, this thought gained full impulse in his mind ; and again the moving cry of "Transfusion !" reverberated within the living cells of his brain. At one universal swoop he called to mind her thousand fitful contrarieties,—his own dread of De Mara sharing in the precious mystery,—the strange account that Manvers had lately furnished,—and the general maze of confusion that seemed to pervade all their acts and all their intentions. To all

these—each of which was a dagger to his soul—there was but one solution:—that solution he had within his beck and ken; and passive—motionless before him lay the medium of his enterprise.

This, then, was at length the moment for the accomplishment of the Soul's Transfusion. Now must he strain his whole nerve and fibre to the accomplishment of the labour, and give real evidence that he indeed possessed the power, with the theory of which he had so long been pampering his brain.

But though all this and more he urged upon himself, as he stood over the recumbent form of the exhausted maiden, there was that within him which sickened to the death, as he endeavoured to string his resolution to the proper pitch.—What was it that he was about to attempt?—Whither would it lead him?—And what assurance had he that he could steady the whole of this trying course with so curbing a hand, as to be master throughout of each movement that the change required?—Now that the trial scene was in sooth before him, a thousand first-born perils rushed in quick succession through his soul, and he trem-

bled at the stupendous magnitude of the machine he was called upon to govern. A night of scaring and mysterious sensations enveloped him ; and he was like the traveller, when he wanders, solitary and timorous, through the midnight gloom over some vast infrequent moor, prone each instant to give an unnatural and overwhelming dimension to objects, that in a more defining light would pass unheeded and unfeared.

Yet still by some irresistible impulse he was urged forward. " Now, now ! " he whispered to himself, even at the very moment that these heart-felt apprehensions almost shook him from his purpose ; and still closer and closer he crouched towards the unconscious partner of his intention, as though no prying eye should be observant of what passed between them.—But why did he still pause ?—It was that last very thought that checked him. O God, what if some one through chink or crevice was prying into the mysterious rites about to be solemnised ! He listened with an acute intensity that would almost have traced the breathing of an infant ; but no sound, the smallest, broke the awful silence of the place,

save the low, gentle respirations of the motionless form that lay before him. Still the dread of intrusive eyes was upon him, and with stealthy gliding pace he crept still nearer to the window that backed the ottoman, there to gaze and certify to all his wildly beating pulses that none without were stationed to take note or observation of that which was about to pass within. As he approached, the light breeze that stole through the casement played upon his burning forehead; and he felt as if it was wafting him from some dark murky cavern, where all things monstrous dwelt, to the regions of humanity and earthliness. The sensation struck upon his resolution; and again the thought was with him that he would abandon his fearful undertaking. But a sound,—hark! a sound disturbs the heretofore stillness of the room—it is the voice of Madeline half breaking through the trance that enwraps her.

What are the words she utters?—"De Mara! Ah, ha! he sleeps!—now, Albert, now! This is the moment to give me De Mara's soul!"

The accents reach the brother's ear; and he receives them as a fresh and irresistible summons.

They tell him what he is to expect should Madeline arouse from her repose :—they tell him, too, that what he still deems to be her slumber is light and treacherous, and each instant ready to give way before the exciting subjects of her musing.

But still the broad light of day oppresses him. The glorious face of the sun, once his delight and comforter, now seems to be watching him in his mysteries, and to be exposing the secresy of his ways to the observation of all mankind. There is one remedy ; and, as he perceives it, he hurries to close the shutters of the casement :—with careful hand he draws the curtains that surround the window ;—and the relief he seeks is afforded. The whole room is shrouded in night, save where a solitary and wire-drawn stream of day steals through the crevice of the door, making a sort of "darkness visible," that does but add to the obscurity of the scene, and brings with it a sort of consolation to the feeling of the youth, helping to remind him of the glare that a minute since illuminated the place, but now so happily excluded.

Even at the moment that he has thus succeeded in extinguishing day's brightness, Madeline speaks

again, and in more hurried, painful accents than before. It is the last warning; and again Albert feels that he is summoned to the mysterious change that has now become the hope-all of his existence, and again he leans over his sister, prepared to work its consummation.

But it is time to check the narrative of that which it was never intended for man's knowledge to span. As Albert has drawn the curtain of night around the scene of operation, so let me arrange the veil of obscurity around the further description of his dark proceedings. Never was it the purport of this chronicle to tell by what unearthly means the Soul's Transfusion might be accomplished. The relation of these sad and tragical events alone requires that the fact of his power should be stated; and, that done, it will be sufficient to pass on to the circumstances of the wondrous change that he too well knew how to effect.

Never, never would he have dared the enterprise, had he for a moment dived into the real condition of his sister's intellect. Had it once been whispered to him that her erst majestic mind had been

fast crumbling into decay, and was now within her a scathed and blighted ruin, his marvel at her demeanour would have ceased, and he would have found no occasion to resort to so violent a method of discovering the meaning of what had baffled his best skill to interpret. But her symptoms of a shaken brain had so come upon him by degrees, that the truth had never for an instant approached his consideration of the subject. All that his observation had taught him was, that there was some strange unaccountable principle stirring within her, and that to ascertain it was beyond his power without resorting to the great arcanum that belonged to him.

But it is accomplished! The mystery is performed,—Transfusion! His soul—moved by a mighty spell, recedes from its natural mansion, and is forced into the shattered and crazed abode which Madeline's has hitherto occupied. And where was the poor girl's informing spirit? Imprisoned in a mechanism of fleshly bars, the troubled current of her blood, the unstrung tortured nerves, the diseased unsettled brain had acted on its essence, and it was incapable of per-

forming its usual operations with instruments so confused and jarring. It had lost its directing power! But even while the nobler part of the Orphan had been overborne by the earthly, the warning voice had been spoken, the imprisoned soul had been called: it had struggled for freedom, and felt the impulses of another world steal over its sinking consciousness.—Already it hovered on the lips of its mistress, when the words of Albert set it free. This was the last token of mortal servitude: its hour was come, the last page turned in its hapless story;—powers of which Albert was unaware, which no mortal could control, were developed in the spiritual essence; and, before the words were uttered that were to call it to another earthly abode, it was gone! It had obeyed that law which we call death, but it felt it was a better life—life eternal; and, escaping from every terrestrial thraldom, it had flown to its Almighty Maker.

Meanwhile the soul of Albert had entered the sickly dissolving organs of his poor sister. The healthy masculine spirit shrunk from a habitation so strange, so shattered, so unfit,—but it must

obey—and the form of the dying girl rose upright; the opening speculative eyes became aware of the scene around.—Albert's soul looked forth from the organs of Madeline—but, alas! it was no longer the spirit that lately ruled his own body: energetic, true, entire in itself—it felt too sensitively the influence of the diseased frame into which it had been forced to take refuge, and trembled and shrunk with its weakness. Had it possessed a sufficient portion of its former firmness, he had not dallied, but returned at once to the senseless corpse which he had so madly deserted, and which lay motionless before him, uninformed by that heaven-born spark which imparts to our earth-sprung bodies the vital power that prevents them from mingling with their kindred dust. Albert's soul saw its late tenement breathless—motionless—dead! But his sight was confused, his enfeebled thoughts refused to obey the master-will. "Where am I?" he exclaimed; "ah! Madeline, where art thou? Soul of my sister! I adjure! I command!—Ha! What is the spell? Why is my recollection so halt? I have a thought, and now it is gone!—and my limbs

sink beneath me, and strange sickness is at my heart! Oh!—what have I done? Where am I?" and the miserable youth sank down, and covered his eyes with his hands, and strove to collect his scattered, incapable intellects.

Fond idiot! Little dreamt he, when in his pride of heart he hugged the betraying secret to his bosom, that he was at that moment fostering his most ruthless foe. Little did he foresee how it would tempt him on, till at last it would decoy him to a change that would rob him—irretrievably rob him of his joy-bestowing thoughts, his glorious meditations, his air-built reveries, his pure elastic spirit, and leave him nought in return but eternal sorrow and vain regret.

Madeline's soul had left this earthly world!—Madeline was dead! The informing spirit of her brother, healthy and entire, had entered her frame, and its failing mechanism had recovered a transitory strength; but its fevered blood, and disturbed brain, influenced in their turn the stranger soul: the dissolution already at work in his new-found abode was delayed; but it paused only in its operations. He felt that the muscles,

fibres, and nerves, which he animated, would soon cease to obey him; he sought within the recesses of his mind for the only remedy, the power—the spell that would restore him to his deserted body. But it came not—and, in its stead, weakness and fear; and convulsive gaspings shook yet more the errant spirit. "O for a remedy! for human help, and a kind hand and voice to encourage and calm!" Still as he reflected, terror grew—again, shaking and trembling in every joint, the form of Madeline arose and wrung its hands,—"Help!" cried an unaccustomed voice—"O, help! Seaton! Uncle! Help!" The idea gave momentary relief. He would seek Manvers and tell him all; and the unshaken intellects of his relative might find some means of restoring the physical machinery that now refused to obey his will: his despairing soul felt that if some cordial medicine would renovate but for a minute the falling fabric he longed to quit, he might regain thought, memory—the spell, and succeed in transferring his exiled spirit to its rightful mansion.

But let me hurry to the concluding scene of this fatal tragedy.

The half hour that De Mara had allowed Warner for the prosecution of his machinations against the wretched Madeline was watched by the nobleman with the most feverish anxiety: each moment appeared to him an age; and whatever sound stirred, whatever accent reached his ear, roused him to the most painful attention. At length, when endurance seemed to be at its worst, an approaching step was heard, and De Mara sprang to the door to greet the coming (as he fondly hoped) of Madeline and his agent: but he looked for either in vain. He who entered was Manvers.—All pale with anxiety, and breathless with ill-conditioned haste, the good old man had endeavoured to trace the flight of the guilty Warner. But not once had he caught a glimpse of the fugitive. Either the strong and hardy frame of the ruffian had enabled him far to outstrip the irresolute pace of his enfeebled follower, or else his wily cunning (taught by long experience that a circuitous course was the most effectual way to defy pursuit) had taken some more intricate and tortuous road to the village, than that adopted by the

Senior. Be the cause, however, what it might, Manvers soon lost all hope of overtaking him. Still, by diligence and determination, there was room to expect that the guilty pair, on whose heads the blood of Wahrend called aloud for vengeance, might be secured before they could effect their escape from Unwalden. With this object in view, Manvers hurried to the inn, where a while before he had seen the carriage stop, and, after a hasty word to the host in explanation of his errand, he ascended to De Mara's apartment.

The Count, who had entirely concluded that the step he heard upon the stairs was that of Urfort, was taken by surprise at the entry of one who was a perfect stranger to him: but before he had time to inquire the meaning of the intrusion, Manvers exclaimed, "Count De Mara, you are my prisoner!"

"Never, while life remains," cried the startled nobleman; and he snatched from the table, near which he stood, the pistols with which it had been Altoz's care to provide him.

"Count," returned Manvers, "it is in vain

you struggle. Me you may send to join the murdered Wahrend; but the whole village is alarmed, and you are beset on every side. The time is come when you must answer justice."

"That is yet to be seen, old man," exclaimed De Mara, his fury fast increasing:—"one step nearer, and I fire. Meanwhile safety may chance to lie behind me." And as he spoke he threw open the bed-room door, with the intention of making his escape by the back window, before those, whom he imagined to be posted in front, could make good their capture.

To the astonishment of Manvers, this action of the Count exposed to his view the monster Warner, whom he had in vain pursued. But whatever might be the old man's feelings, they were more than equalled by De Mara's surprise, for as he prepared to rush forward to the window of the chamber, he found it already occupied with the sturdy form of Warner, who, with the red box (the contents of which had so excited his admiration) fast grasped under his arm, was in the very act of making his escape by that outlet, through which he had a minute before stealthily obtained ingress in pursuit of his booty.

The whole of this was perceived and interpreted by the Count in a tenth part of the time that it has occupied in telling ; and as the conviction flashed upon his mind, he levelled the pistol which his right hand grasped, and fired.

A deep-rendered groan from Warner told the result : for a moment he tried to clutch the window-frame, but, missing in his attempt, he fell heavily backward on the chamber floor, while his right arm still convulsively kept possession of the booty, for the sake of which he had made such a desperate venture.

At that very instant a posse of the villagers, headed by the host, rushed into the chamber from without, and before the Count could recover his self-possession, he found himself disarmed and in custody.

This effected, one of the party advanced for the purpose of lifting Warner from the ground, and to afford such relief as the case might allow. The agonies of death were upon him ; but his whole frame seemed to shudder, as he perceived the meaning of the attempt ; and, after a moment's struggle with the pangs that scathed him, he

exclaimed, in a shriek—"Away! and touch me not, unless you are so in love with the blood of a dare-all, that you needs must dye your hands in the drenching. Away! I say—and stand not between me and my noble patron."

"Execrable monster!" muttered De Mara.

He, who was thus apostrophised, seemed to be fast sinking into annihilation; yet, once again, though with a fearful struggle, he summoned his expiring spirit to a rally.

"I say I will see the Count. Good gentlemen, let him stand near, for sight gives way, and I have him not in view."

De Mara shook his head, as if in token of disgust, but the dying man still continued—"What! will he not come? I have a precious word for his comfort. Bid him come, or he loses it for ever."

The nobleman, in whom hope was not utterly extinct, was excited by these words, and he approached the spot where Warner lay writhing in his gore.

"Ah!" cried the latter, "I see you now. Give me your hand."

De Mara with an effort complied.

The villain seized it; and for a minute so fastening was his gripe, that it appeared as if he had started forth afresh to his pristine vigour.

He seized it; and, deep and loud, burst from him a fit of frightful laughter, such as made good men tremble with the thought that something worse than human dwelt within that bosom.

"Ah, ha, ha!" he exclaimed; "do we indeed shake hands at last? Why, this is a friendly parting. Gentlemen, I owe my patron a good turn for the bullet that racks me to the core; and I will pay him. I introduce you to the murderer of Wahrend,—to the would-be seducer of Madeline—of my daughter."

"Your daughter!" cried De Mara; but what further he would have said was checked by Warner suddenly quitting hold of his hand, and once again sinking to the ground. For a short minute it was as though he were dead:—yet not so. The last struggle came, and fearful was the exhibition. Groan succeeded groan, each more death-inscribed than the last;—the huge and iron sinews of his body palpitated, as it were,

with sickening velocity; and his nervous frame rolled upon the floor in miserable torture.

"Devils! Devils!" he shouted, goaded by agony to madness,—"why help you not?—One stab—oh, for mercy, one heart-stab to end this thrall! No! all around me are demons, and there is no Christian mercy left. Ah! now I see why none have mercy. Look! look!—their forms change. Yonder stands Agnes ready with a thousand whips to lacerate this flesh—too suffering already; and there by her side stand both her parents, while Manvers beckons them this way:—they look—O God! how pale and woe-enthralled they look!—And there—no, I will not see her!—Take Deboos away, lest she conjure to my sight her uncle's corpse, as it lay bleeding in the hall of his *casino*. Why do you let her grasp my throat, and choke my very breathing?—I thought strangling was more easy. What! Madeline and Albert too! Do they come to curse their father? Do they curse me?—I curse them! Yes,—with this last throe—all—each—world—mankind—I CURSE!"

So died the fiend.

Those that looked on felt as if they were indeed cursed in having to witness such a death. The honesty of their natures shuddered at words of such inhuman import ; and the bystanders crowded far away into a distant corner, as if with one common impulse of avoiding nearer contact with so foul a being. But, whatever the disgust they felt, they could not help listening with harrowing interest to his dying exclamations ; and so entirely were they absorbed by them that no one heard the stoppage of a carriage at the door of the *auberge*, or was conscious of the entrance of one who listened with deepest pain to Warner's condemnation of the Count, and with engrossing horror to his still more sweeping condemnation of himself.

He who had thus arrived was Altoz. The earliest impulse of the Count, who was the first to perceive him after death had closed the imprecations of Urfort, was to advance towards his former friend, as if for a moment he had forgotten the inquisitorial errand that had brought him to Unwalden. But if it were so, one glance at the expression of the Chevalier's countenance was sufficient to bring back to his recollection the

manner in which they had parted; and the one instant of pleasure he had derived from perceiving the entrance of Altoz was speedily overwhelmed in the consideration that he, too, was there to help to crush him beyond the reach of hope.

The Chevalier's surprise at the scene that offered itself to his gaze need not be pourtrayed. The words that he had heard fall from Warner, ere he lay a corpse on the blood-stained floor, and the conscious shrinking of De Mara from all men's eyes, easily led him to the conclusion, that the cause of Wahrend's death being discovered, was the meaning of the crowd that filled the chamber, and that the time was near at hand when the Frenchman would have to render an account at a much more powerful tribunal than that of which he was the accredited representative.

While he conned these circumstances in his mind, he stood for a moment irresolute; but, that elapsed, he drew nearer to the nobleman and spoke. "Count de Mara," cried he, "you know the business that has brought me to Unwalden. I will not mention it publicly, as it might tend to your detriment. It is sufficient for me to demand

whether you are prepared to afford that explanation which I was commissioned by my friends to require from you this morning ? "

" Oh, Altoz ! Altoz !" exclaimed the prisoner in low tone, " let this be at another time, I entreat. For one short hour forget that I am under ban, and assist me through the fearful difficulty in which you find me placed. — Good gentlemen," added he, raising his voice, " this is the Chevalier Altoz, —a Spaniard of high rank,—a most responsible nobleman ! I beseech you to take his guarantee for my forthcoming at the necessary time."

" Count," cried Altoz, in a whisper, " for your own sake I entreat you to be silent. I have already done more in your behalf than I can justify to myself, or those who sent me.

" Oh ! Altoz," returned the Frenchman, " let me entreat you !—Remember our thousand pledges of friendship ! remember our plighted bonds of union ! And will you *now* desert me ? Will you suffer De Mara — your friend De Mara, to be dragged to a common dungeon—perchance to a common scaffold ? Great God ! can you hear these words, and still refuse me ?"

The Chevalier was prevented the pain of further refusal by the magistrate of the village (who by this time had joined the party assembled in the chamber) approaching the spot where they were standing apart in converse.

"Sir," said he to the Chevalier, "you will doubtless excuse my interference, when you understand that my duty requires it. The Count de Mara is a prisoner under the most serious charge; and I may not—I must not permit any one whatever to hold communication with him previous to his examination."

Altoz bowed, and seemed as if he were about to withdraw, but he was interrupted by the Count, whose every action appeared instinct with the most feverish—nay, cowardly—anxiety.

"For the sake of Heaven, and of mercy, leave me not, good Altoz!" he exclaimed;—"I look around, and all men's eyes save yours are fierce and angry.—And you, Sir," continued he, turning to the magistrate, "can it be indeed your duty to refuse this gentleman's guarantee? In all honour, in all honesty,—he will be answerable for my appearance at the needful time:—I myself will swear to be forthcoming."

The Chevalier felt that it was time to speak out, for, by the busy whispers that ran round the apartment, he could perceive that the propriety of his own detention was in agitation. "Count de Mara," said he, solemnly, "I know not what authority this gentleman may have to receive sureties for your manumission; but thus much out of respect for myself I am bound to say—that one of those sureties I can never consent to become. My task here will be performed when I shall have informed you, that the explanation which has been demanded of you not having been given, I am authorised in the name of the Knot to pronounce your perpetual and irrevocable expulsion from their body."

"Is it so?" cried the Count, rendered desperate by the manner in which he found himself becoming more and more involved in the overbearing consequences of his design upon the unfortunate Madeline.—"Is it so, indeed? And has it been for such friends as these, De Mara, that you have dared the world's censure, and good men's curse? —No, not their curse, for it is only bad men who curse. Has it been for such hollow companions

that you have sacrificed the pursuit of all that is good and all that is admirable?"

"Sir," interrupted the magistrate, "my office requires that I should immediately see you placed in custody."

"Custody!" iterated De Mara:—"Ah, now it is coming!—Now judgment and revenge are fastening on me, and my yet unsullied name will in a little while be enrolled in a jail-list to challenge the finger of scorn, and the hatred of honesty. But I will not go!—I will not be dragged to contamination!"

"Stand forward, men!" exclaimed the magistrate, authoritatively, on hearing the Count's last words:—"one of you open the door that leads to the stairs, and let the rest seize the prisoner."

"Off, off, you ministers of pollution!" shouted De Mara:—"oh, gracious Heaven! is there not one in all the world yet left to side with me? Alas! for Madeline,—where is she?—Does *she*, too, leave me to my disgrace?"

Even as he spoke, light fleet steps were heard on the stairs, and the rustle of a woman's dress. De Mara started, and every eye turned towards the

door, as the form of Madeline entered, tottering and feeble—her face pale and wan—her eyes alone speaking life and energy. Manvers uttered an exclamation of pity and terror; but at so dread a moment, despite her altered looks, joy danced upon De Mara's heart. He was reviled, deserted by all—by all save the dear fond being he had so cruelly betrayed: but she was true—was his. He knew what woman's clinging fondness is! He knew the sex's fidelity—its firm adherence to the loved object in danger and misery—here there was a friend. Her entreaties might bring Seaton to his side, or her woman's wit find means of freedom for him. Oh! well he knew that the passionately-loving girl would incur any risk—endure every hardship for the sake of liberating the object of her tenderest affections from death. Besides, De Mara loved—selfish and profligate as he was, he adored the beauty—he worshipped the true and loving creature whom he now believed to stand before him. Gladness lighted up his eyes, and his plan was already formed. Every promise, every sacrifice should be made, but he would win this angel-guest to hover near his steps—to

wait on him—to plan, to execute his liberation.

The form of Madeline stood motionless—her eyes turned from one object to another—she saw Seaton, and stretched out her hand with a smile, while De Mara, approaching, in the soft sweet voice that had before had despot-influence of the maiden, he whispered — " This is kind, my Madeline! you are here, and all is well. I fear no danger—I know no harm while you are present. Dearest Madeline, forsake me not!"

" I will not"—such words issued from the Orphan's lips, while a bitter smile curled them—" I will not forsake you, De Mara! Man of many crimes, I will be near you to the last, and my voice shall pronounce your doom!"

There was something jarring in the tone, something in her kindling, angry gaze that startled De Mara. Yet he was prepared for her indignation and reproaches; and his wish was to soothe—to show how all was changed—to bring back soft-yielding love to her subdued heart.—" Ah, dearest!" he exclaimed, " the doom you pronounce is all that can weigh on De Mara's soul!—The false accusations, the bolts and bars of these mis-

taken men, even if they could wreak all their power, are nothing to me. Do you speak to me, Madeline—and be true to me!"

He watched the changes of her countenance, and as she looked inquiringly around, he replied to the questioning expression of her face, "You may indeed wonder, sweetest, to find me thus surrounded—a prisoner! But do not fear: these men are powerless; they accuse me of I know not what—of a duel—of Wahrend's unhappy death;—but even in this low-thoughted republic of Geneva, the code of honour must find partizans."

"Honour!" articulated the being whom he addressed; "Oh, praise the honour of De Mara! So, it is discovered—it is known; and my murdered friend will be avenged!"

Every one looked now astonished and inquisitive, while De Mara, in a voice of reproach, exclaimed—"Madeline! my Madeline!"

"Speak not that honoured name!" replied the other, in solemn accents; "dare not turn your thoughts on the much-injured one! I will not here speak of Madeline's wrongs—of your treachery—your coward falsehoods. The tears—the

heart-pangs of the miserable orphan, are heavily counted against you: but I speak not of those; I must, while these feeble, failing organs permit, perform another, an imperious duty. Gentlemen——"

All turned to listen;—her ghastly pale countenance—her shivering, trembling limbs, excited pity, but there was an expression of solemn majesty in her eye, and if her voice seemed weak, yet the articulation was clear though slow, and all listened awe-struck and eager.

"Gentlemen, hear me! My fate, I know not what it is or will be—it hangs by a thread—I almost feel as if I were about to die, but I will perform one duty, and leave to pitying Heaven the consummation of my hapless destiny. Gentlemen, Count de Mara is a murderer! I speak of the thing I saw—of the words I heard; I received the last words of the assassinated Wahrend. The Count's servant was present at the duel - the true-hearted Swiss trusted to a nobleman's faith, and was content with this one witness—a fellow perjured—suborned—the vile instrument of his vile master's will. Wahrend was murdered! He died

by no fair wound! In cold blood those two friends plunged the sword into his heart! Believe me, for I saw—I know—let not the murderer escape—let retribution be his! Seaton, my uncle!—listen—mark my words! draw near—oh, help!"

A thousand times, as the being before him spoke, De Mara would have interrupted. The solemn voice overbore his passionate exclamations; but this voice grew more feeble—the form of Madeline sank upon the floor. Manvers rushed to her side, and with fond and tender exclamations tried to call back her fainting spirits. A smile illuminated the countenance on which he gazed!—the hand of the dying one softly pressed his. "Too late!" murmured the broken, but still sweet voice—"your help is too late! And so best! I would not survive events so horrible! My uncle, I am satisfied to die."

"Say not those words!" cried De Mara, forgetting her cruel denunciations—her, what appeared to him, insane or false assertions—his crimes and dangers:—forgetting all, De Mara rushed forward and knelt beside the form that lay gasping, fainting on the floor. "Die not, my Madeline! O live!

Even while I die, thy victim, lovely and injured Madeline, live!"

The eyes of the lost one unclosed: they were fixed on De Mara. He could not mistake the glance of hatred, of deep and eternal abhorrence, that they darted on him. "I die thy victim; Count, my death will also be numbered in the list of thy crimes!"

"O Madeline, cruel girl, overwhelm me not," cried De Mara, frantic at the very thought that he had lost her love, even in death; "recall those words! O Madeline, live, or, dying, pity—pity the miserable wretch before you! Despite all, be mine,—be true! I shall expiate all soon—the scaffold—the block! O Madeline! to these you bring me! Yet I forgive,—and do you forgive;—bless me, even now!"

He strove to take her wan lifeless hand—ah! how tenderly even in death and horror had the fond, faithful Madeline replied to his adjurations, whose earnestness and truth even excited pity in Manvers! But the masked Albert had feelings too high wrought;—the death of Wahrend—of his beloved sister, still excited his keenest sorrow; his

own wretched destiny stung him with despair. De Mara's touch excited uncontrollable abhorrence—the living spirit re-animated with one other effort the dissolving frame, and, as with lightning flash, one moment of power was granted—the hand was snatched away ;—the eyes, the lips, the whole countenance expressed unutterable detestation,—the voice pronounced " My curse is on thee !" and the form sunk on the floor heavy and dull—the soul was gone—Albert's soul had fled the ungenial dungeon it had so madly sought,—and the form of Madeline lay dead.

The task is finished—the labour at an end ! We cannot dilate on the revulsion of horror that agonised De Mara, when he saw his hapless victim expiring at his feet. He believed that madness had lately animated her—thus only could he account for her words ; but he had brought her to this—and she was dead ! The death of Wahrend sat heavy on his soul ; but with burden a thousandfold did the fate of the beloved Madeline oppress him. He felt that however innocent in absolute act, he was a twice-told assassin—he was satisfied to pay the penalty of his crimes ; and here we let

fall the veil over his fate. For little pleasure it would be to follow the guilty nobleman from Unwalden to his dungeon—from his dungeon to his trial—from his trial to the scaffold, where all was expiated; even though remorse most bitter, and heart-felt repentance did some small grace to his dying hours.

Little reward would it be to the historian of this sad tale, to tell how the miserable Manvers was led from life towards death, till those who looked on him thought that they beheld the thin unembodied genie of woe and wretchedness, rather than the mortal victim of their peace-denying energy.

He had clasped the dead form of his erring lost niece to his heart; he had endeavoured to restore vitality; and when he found all his efforts vain, and was forced to entertain the conviction that she was indeed no more, his thoughts reverted to Albert. Where was he? Why had he deserted his sister? What would be his anguish on finding that he had lost her for ever? Manvers left the corpse of poor Madeline to the care of the women of the village, who gathered

weeping round ; and with broken uncertain gait directed his steps to the Single Cottage. He looked intently, as he proceeded, to discover whether Albert was approaching ; desirous, however sad the task, to be the first to inform him of his miserable loss. He reached the threshold of the cottage—all was silent within ; and the darkness that reigned in the room spoke only of emptiness. Manvers was about to turn away when an object caught his eye : he rushed to the window—tore back the shading curtains—dashed open the shutters, and then with a shriek recognised the lifeless body of Albert lying at his feet.

* * * *

The Orphans were buried beside their mother in the village churchyard. An impenetrable mystery concealed the cause of the double death. But they were gone ; and that sufficed for Manvers. His days and nights were spent beside their graves. The children of the village beheld him with reverential terror :—the women strove to console him, and to withdraw him from the abodes of death. He answered their solicitations

by tears only; and still the shades of evening, the dark night-dews, the sun, the tempest, and the frost, find him beside the graves of those he loved and lost.

THE END.

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